

هكمان الفصل

Weekend

FINANCIAL TIMES

Weekend FT
Mob rule in Japan



Gorillas in
the viewfinder



The virtual
university



SECTION II

World Business Newspaper

WEEKEND MARCH 16/MARCH 17 1996

Rise in US output provides further evidence of growth

US industrial production registered its largest monthly gain in eight years last month, providing further evidence that the economy is gaining momentum. The Federal Reserve said production rose 1.2 per cent after a revised decline of 0.4 per cent in January, when activity was depressed by cold weather. Most analysts had expected an increase of about 0.8 per cent. Page 22 and Lex; Clinton again looks horns with Congress, Page 2

US figures send London stocks down: London stocks looked to be riding out an expected turbulent day which featured a series of monthly futures and options expiries across Europe and in the US until fears of a rise in inflation in the US after strong output figures weakened gains. In London, the FT-SE 100 index was down 37 points at 3,644.8, almost wiping out Thursday's 41.5 gain. Over the week the index showed a 65.5 point decline. Bonds, Page 16; World stocks, Page 17; London stocks, Page 19; Markets, Weekend FT Page XXII

German warrant for Iranian minister: Germany has been forced to examine its much-criticised role as Iran's biggest trading partner after the German prosecutor issued a warrant for the arrest of Ali Fallahian, the Iranian minister suspected of ordering the 1992 bombing of a Berlin restaurant which killed four Iranian dissidents. Page 2

French move to ban personal stereo noise: French authorities are planning legislation to ban the sale of any personal stereo with a peak output above 100 decibels and have demanded that the manufacturer be sold with a non-detachable "health warning" that prolonged listening at high volumes could permanently damage the ears. Page 22

Japan's industrial output flat: The weakness of Japan's economic recovery was underlined by official data showing a sharp rise in household debt last year and stagnant industrial output in January. Page 22; Consumer demand remains weak, Page 3; Mob rule, Weekend FT Page 1

Sentex company wins Royal award: Prince Charles has renewed controversy as it emerged that his main overseas organisation has awarded an environmental prize to the manufacturers of the plastic explosive Sentex. Page 4

China steps up pressure on Taiwan: China is to hold a further round of military exercises even closer to Taiwanese territory during the island's presidential election on March 23. Page 3; The thorn in China's side, Page 9

The World Bank board has backed a debt initiative, drawn up with the International Monetary Fund, bringing a comprehensive approach to the debt problems of the world's poorest countries a step closer. Page 3

VW shares jump: Net profits at Volkswagen, the German motor group, rose from DM150m to DM338m (\$228m) last year, prompting a strong rise in the company's shares. Page 5

Sweden pledges crusade for jobs: Sweden's incoming prime minister, Göran Persson, pledged that tackling the country's double-digit unemployment would be his government's priority. Page 2

Minorco, the Luxembourg-quoted subsidiary of the Anglo American Corporation of South Africa, achieved a 60 per cent increase in earnings before tax and exceptional items to \$655m last year. Page 5

Restructured Wembley reduces loss: The drawing power of some big acts and video lottery fruit machines helped Wembley, the heavily restructured UK stadium and greyhound track operator, cut its deficit sharply last year. Page 6

Einstein manuscript for sale: The first manuscript of Albert Einstein's theory of relativity goes on sale at Sotheby's auction house in New York today with experts predicting that the handwritten 72-page document could sell for between \$4m and \$6m.

Companies in this issue		
AT&T	2	Johnson Cleaners
Adam Opel	5	Laigh Interests
Alco	5	Lucas Inds
Aspen Comm	5	Mediast
BET	5	Minicor
BSG International	5	Novus
Blue Arrow	5	Mowlem (John)
British Data Mangt	5	Perry
British Telecom	22, 1	Phytopharm
Citic Pacific	5	Pentok
Coal Inds	5	Polite-Royce
Cookson	5	Sart
Corporate Services	5	Shor
Deimler-Benz	5	Slabe
Dow Jones Ind Ave	5	Sony
Dow Jones Ind Ave	5	Swire Pacific
Dow Jones Ind Ave	5	Unitech
Dow Jones Ind Ave	5	Volkswagen
Dow Jones Ind Ave	5	Wernley
Dow Jones Ind Ave	5	Yorkshire Water

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New group takes on viable parts of Dutch aircraft maker ■ Over 5,600 jobs lost

Last-ditch talks fail to save Fokker from bankruptcy

By Ronald van de Krol in Amsterdam

Fokker, the 77-year-old aviation company whose aircraft are the industrial pride of the Netherlands, collapsed into bankruptcy yesterday. Last-ditch talks with Samsung of South Korea failed to produce a binding rescue offer.

The company's core aircraft-building business will be wound down with the loss of 5,654 jobs - the biggest mass redundancy in Dutch corporate history.

Viable parts of the Fokker group, such as aircraft maintenance, defence contracting and aviation electronics, will be transferred to a new holding company, Fokker Aviation.

This will safeguard 1,550 jobs in these sectors and provide work for 950 people dismissed by the main Fokker company.

"The consequences of this bankruptcy are dramatic," Mr Ben van Schaik, management board chairman, said. "This means the end of 77 years of airplane building in the Netherlands." The bankruptcy will also

have serious consequences for suppliers outside the Netherlands such as Short Brothers in Northern Ireland, which builds wings for Fokker's aircraft, and Daimler Benz Aerospace (Dasa) of Germany, which makes fuselages.

Since late January, Fokker has held serious discussions about a takeover with Bombardier of Canada, Samsung of South Korea and Aviation Industries of China.

Fokker bankruptcy hits the workforce at Shorts... Page 5
World stocks... Page 17
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Bombardier, the parent company of Short Brothers, withdrew from the talks, leaving Samsung as the main contender.

Mr van Schaik and the administrators had phoned and faxed Samsung until the early hours of yesterday, but the effort failed. Bankruptcy then became inevitable because bridging credit provided by the Dutch government ran out yesterday. Mr van Schaik

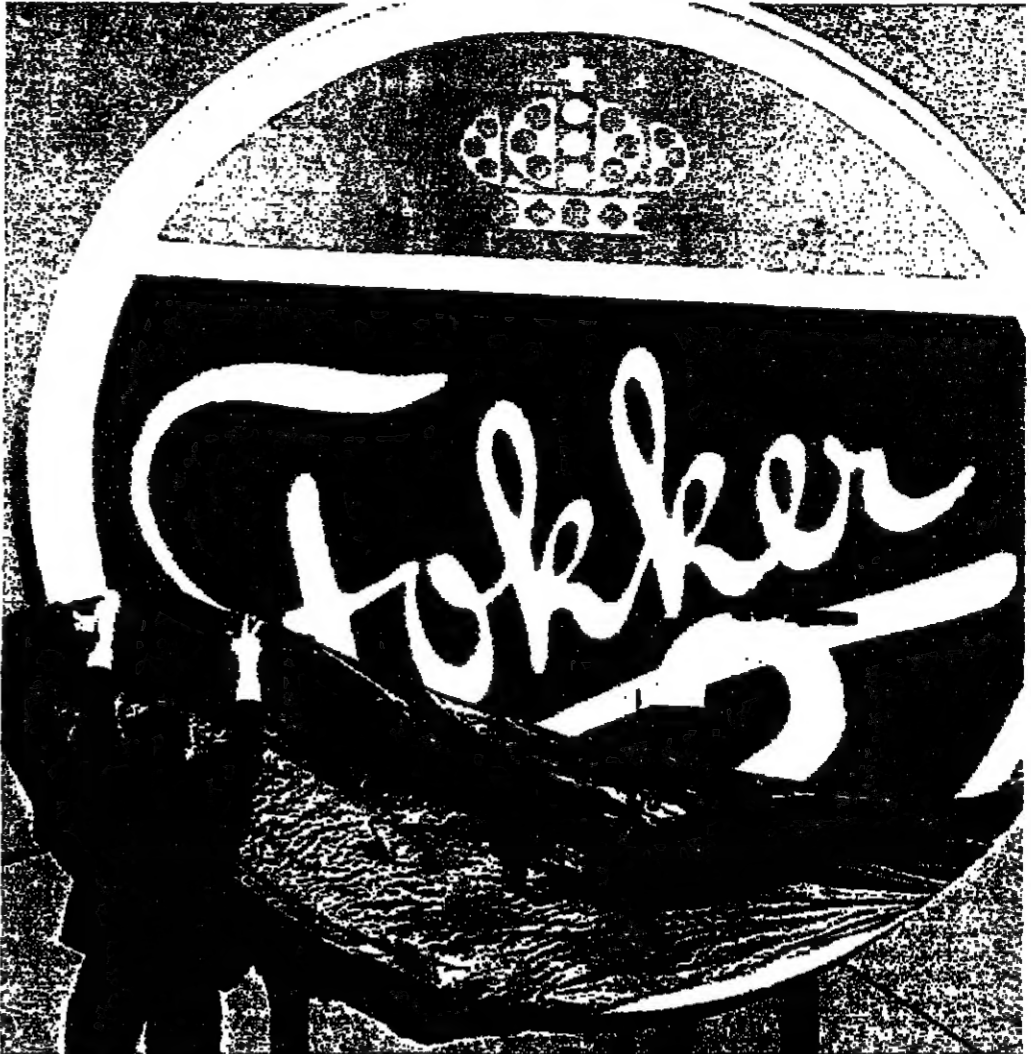
said the difficulty of establishing a leasing company for Fokker aircraft formed one of the main obstacles to reaching agreement with a foreign partner.

Fokker expects to be able to complete the assembly of about 15 aircraft currently under construction at its factory near Amsterdam's Schiphol airport.

Airlines around the world have 1,100 Fokker airplanes in service. "Their safe operation in the future is guaranteed because the necessary technical support will continue to be available," the company said, citing the existence of the new Fokker Aviation.

Mr van Schaik, visibly tired after around-the-clock talks with the government, administrators and potential rescuers, said: "The collapse of this industry is very damaging for the standing of the Netherlands in the world and will not be understood by very many people in the Netherlands - and especially by people outside the Netherlands." Mr Peter

Continued on Page 22



Signing off: a worker covers a Fokker sign at the company's headquarters in Amsterdam yesterday after the Dutch aviation group collapsed into bankruptcy with the loss of 5,654 jobs. Picture: Reuters

Officials break law in campaign to re-elect Yeltsin

By Chrystie Freeland in Moscow

Russian bureaucrats have been breaking the law in an effort to guarantee President Boris Yeltsin's re-election in June.

Mr Vladimir Davydov, the deputy prosecutor-general, told parliament yesterday that, to ensure the Kremlin leader collected the million signatures required to register in the presidential race, some government officials had been illegally pressuring employees to sign pro-Yeltsin nominations.

The accusations, coming from the government's own law enforcement officials, could tarnish the president's effort to present himself as an anti-corruption campaigner and are likely to give the Communists fresh ammunition in their attacks on an administration they describe as criminal and inept.

Election officials said pro-Yeltsin signatures collected in the regions where the violations had been committed were not valid, but the breaches would not disqualify Mr Yeltsin from the race.

"For the Central Electoral Commission these facts are sufficient reason to not accept the signatures we have received from these regions," said Mr Alexander Veshniakov, a CEC official.

But [electoral law] does not allow us to impose tougher sanctions in response to these violations, such as refusing to register the candidate in question for the elections."

Mr Davydov said the worst offenders were railway officials in the East Siberian and Altai regions. Railway workers were

asked to sign pro-Yeltsin petitions when collecting their pay, and managers were required to give their leaders twice daily reports on the signature drive.

The State Committee for Metallurgy, a government department, was equally zealous, establishing an internal Yeltsin campaign office staffed by senior civil servants.

"The leadership of the committee created all the conditions needed to infringe on the voting rights of citizens," Mr Davydov said.

Many analysts have argued that the support of Russia's vast bureaucratic machine could give Mr Yeltsin a considerable advantage in the June 16 ballot.

But yesterday's revelations suggest that, in contrast with the Soviet era, government officials neither have the right, nor the power, to deliver the vote. Ironically, the Communists, who are front-runners in the presidential contest, may find it easier to run a democratic campaign because of their millions of supporters. The strong-armed reflexes of his supporters could be embar-

assing for Mr Yeltsin, who is seeking to convince disgruntled voters that he is the best defender of Russia's fragile democracy against the mounting threat of a Communist comeback.

Mr Yeltsin yesterday announced the government Security Council had approved a long-awaited peace plan for Chechnya, the separatist republic where Russia troops have been at war for 15 months. But he refused to give any details.

Treaty annulled, Page 2

BT and Berlusconi may set up Italian telecoms venture

By Hugo Dixon in London and Andrew Hill in Milan

British Telecommunications is in advanced negotiations with Mr Silvio Berlusconi, the Italian politician and media magnate, about forming a joint venture in Italian telecommunications.

As part of the deal under discussion, BT would also acquire a small stake of about 3 per cent in Mediast, Mr Berlusconi's media company, and might appoint a director to its board.

Initially, the venture would offer telecoms services to business users in competition with Telecom Italia, the state-controlled group. After the market is fully opened to competition in 1998, a full range of services including pay-television and

mobile communications might be offered to residential customers.

BT would bring Albacom, an existing alliance with Italy's Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, to the venture. Mediast would contribute its large supply of TV programmes; its TV transmission network would be used to carry telecoms traffic. BT would pay 1,200bn (\$128m) for a 3 per cent stake in Mediast if it bought shares at the same price paid by several Italian banks for a stake last December. BT might pay more if it received a seat on the board. Further investment would be needed by the venture for marketing and building infrastructure.

Although BT is aiming to conclude the negotiations in the next few weeks, talks could still

founder. Fininvest, Mediast's parent company, is also talking to AT&T, the US telephone company, although BT is understood to be the favoured party.

From BT's perspective there are risks in a deal with Mr Berlusconi. Not only is he on trial for allegedly bribing tax police; if he fails to win next month's general election, the proposed venture may be disadvantaged in winning telecoms licences.

An alliance with Mr Berlusconi would also constitute a potential conflict of interest given BT's association with Mr Rupert Murdoch. Mr Murdoch seems set to compete head-on with Mr Berlusconi in pay-TV.

Continued on Page 22
Lex, Page 22

STOCK MARKET INDICES		
FT-SE 100	3,644.8	(-37.0)
Yield	4.07	
FT-SE Eurotrack 100	1,288.14	(+3.08)
FT-SE-A All-Share	1,215.18	(+0.79)
Nikkei	20,190.88	(+257.18)
New York: S&P 500	5,885.70	(-0.36)
Dow Jones Ind Ave	5,885.70	(-0.36)
S & P Composite	5,885.70	(-0.36)
LONDON MONEY		
3-mo Interbank	6.1/4	(6.1/4)
Life long gilt fut	104 1/4	(Jun 104 1/2)
US LUNTIME RATES		
Federal Funds	5 1/4	
3-m Treas Bill: Yld	5.125%	
Long Bond	9 1/2	
Yield	6.737%	
NORTH SEA OIL (Argus)		
Short 15-day (May)	\$18.01	(18.02)
GOLD		
New York Comd/Apr	\$386.9	(386.5)
London	\$386.5	(386.1)
STERLING		
New York lunchtime	\$ 1.5225	
London	\$ 1.5225	(1.5245)
DM	2.2481	(2.2423)
FFr	7.7086	(7.6856)
Sfr	1.814	(1.8086)
Y	161.271	(160.578)
E index	83.4	(83.2)
DOLLAR		
New York lunchtime	DM 1.4726	
FFr	5.048	
Sfr	1.1975	
Y	105.805	
DM	1.476	(1.4708)
FFr	5.0575	(5.0417)
Sfr	1.1905	(1.1864)
Y	105.80	(105.33)
Tokyo close	Y 106.65	

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BRITAIN'S LEADING INVESTMENT HOUSE

Japanese may join derivatives pact later

By Richard Lapper in Boca Raton, Florida

International derivatives exchanges and regulators are hoping their Japanese colleagues will eventually sign an information sharing agreement announced yesterday.

Some 49 exchanges and clearing houses and 14 regulators signed the accord, which is designed to increase transparency in international derivatives markets and reduce systemic risk.

But neither the Japanese supervisory authorities nor futures exchanges are yet party to the agreements which follow initiatives prompted by the Barings crisis last year. Barings collapsed after losing more than \$200m on having built up exposures on exchanges in Singapore and Osaka in Japan.

Executives said regulatory obstacles had prevented the Japanese from signing either the regulators or industry agreements. Supervisors from a number of other jurisdictions, including Switzerland, as well as some other exchanges, have also still to sign.

"Some exchanges are prohibited by local regulation from entering into any information sharing agreement and are working to amend these regulations. It is anticipated that more exchanges and clearing houses will sign the document as conditions change," said the US Futures Industries Association.

Mr Michael Philipp, chairman of the FIA's global task force which co-ordinated the industry initiative, said the Japanese exchanges had provided funding for the task force and had participated in its work. Japanese exchanges supported information sharing and had given out information in the past after obtaining permission from supervisors.

Ms Kathryn Meyer, another task force member, said the Japanese exchanges "expect to be able to sign sometime in the future. We know they are actively working on commercial considerations."

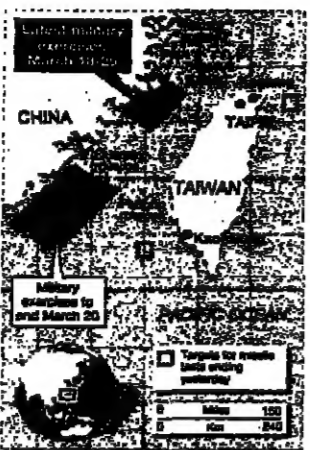
Beijing to hold more live-fire military exercises close to Taiwanese-held islands

China steps up the pressure on Taiwan

By Tony Walker in Beijing and Laura Tyson in Taipei

China is to hold a further round of military exercises even closer to Taiwanese territory during the island's presidential election on March 23.

The official Xinhua news agency said new live-fire exercises would be held at the northern end of the Taiwan Strait. It warned shipping and aircraft to stay clear from



March 18-25. Similar exercises at the southern end of the strait will continue until March 20.

Beijing, which regards Taiwan as a rebel-held province eventually to be recovered, has said it is attempting to frighten Taiwanese from cherishing any dreams of independence. Chinese media yesterday renewed warnings that Beijing would be uncompromising in its opposition to independence moves on Taiwan.

"We should never allow one single inch of land to be split from our motherland's territory," said a bellicose commentary published jointly by People's Daily, the Communist party newspaper, and People's Liberation Army Daily.

The announcement of new war games came on the day that China concluded missile tests into waters off Taiwan's main ports - Keelung in the north and Keelung in the south. It has fired four M-9 intermediate range missiles since March 8.

Chinese television last night led its main news bulletins with triumphalist coverage of

the missile launchings complete with vivid footage of the projectiles blasting off from hilly launch sites.

The People's Daily editorial continued to criticise President Lee Teng-hui of Taiwan accusing him of "stubbornly sticking to his stance of Taiwan independence."

"We should never be indifferent to the increasingly rampant muddy stream of the Taiwan independence or let it move along," the editorial said.

The editorial also advised "some foreign meddlers not to interfere in China's internal affairs". Beijing has been angered by Washington's support for Taiwan.

Tensions in Taiwan appeared to be easing despite yesterday's announcement. Taipei share prices continued to rise yesterday, finishing up 1.74 per cent, partly due to government support but also due to revived investor confidence.

Taiwan's main opposition party, the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party, plans to lead a protest march in Taipei today to demonstrate against unification with the



Pierre Sané, Amnesty International secretary-general, in Hong Kong yesterday to launch a report on human rights in China, said Beijing was treating Taiwanese with the same intolerance it showed to dissidents at home

mainland and to protest at China's military exercises.

This round of manoeuvres will be just 18.5km (10 nautical miles) from the heavily fortified island of Matsu.

Man in the News, Page 9

APEC FINANCE MINISTERS' MEETING

Central banks may try to fight currency swings

By William Dawkins in Tokyo

Pacific rim governments are expected to encourage greater central bank co-ordination to combat exchange rate volatility in a region representing half the world economy, at a meeting of finance ministers tomorrow in Kyoto, Japan.

The US, Japan and Australia hope to use the meeting of the 18 members of the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation forum to give impetus to greater currency co-operation among their central banks, according to officials and diplomats in Tokyo. Asian governments, alarmed by last spring's yen-dollar currency crisis, are said to welcome the prospect.

Apec members are not planning to announce concrete measures at Kyoto, but may issue a general pledge of co-operation, said Japanese finance ministry officials. Mr Robert Rubin, the US treasury secretary, called on fellow Apec finance ministers, before departing for Japan, to "deepen our understanding in Apec of the forces acting on exchange rates and their effects so we can work in concert in future."

Currency co-operation between Asian governments has increased over the past year in response to the drop in the dollar's value, to a record 77.75 against the yen in mid-April. It threatened serious financial strain on Asian governments and companies with yen debts and nearly choked Japan's still fragile economic recovery. The US currency has since risen nearly 25 per cent, but the experience has left governments in the region eager to reduce the risk of a recurrence developing into a Mexican-style capital crisis.

Last November the central banks of Australia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand agreed to lend one another foreign reserves if needed for market intervention. The Japanese foreign

ministry has said it is interested in that accord. Some officials have suggested expanding it to embrace the US and other Asian neighbours, a possibility which may be discussed at the meeting.

In another increase of currency co-ordination, the Bank of Japan last month asked Hong Kong and Singaporean monetary authorities to intervene in foreign exchange markets on its behalf, an extension of an existing pact with Australia. There may be discussion of an Australian idea for an Asian forum of central banks, modelled on the Basle-based Bank for International Settlements.

Also on the finance ministers' agenda is a discussion on how better to use the region's financial markets to channel infrastructure investment to emerging Asian economies. A proposal for a mixed public and private sector fund, led by Japan, to invest in Asian infrastructure projects, is expected to be aired.

Tension between China and Taiwan will be an issue in the sidelines of the meeting. Both finance ministers are planning to be there, the first high-level political contact between them since China started missile tests close to Taiwan last week.

Mr Rubin plans to meet Mr Liu Zhongli, his Chinese counterpart, to discuss China's bid for membership of the World Trade Organisation and US concern over alleged infringement of intellectual property rights. Despite US concern over China's military trials, officials in Tokyo say Washington is keen to continue engaging China in the world economy, a process helped by Beijing's participation in Apec.

Apec includes Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and the US.

Comprehensive approach to problems of world's poorest nations come a step closer

World Bank board backs debt initiative

By Michael Holman

The World Bank board has backed a debt initiative, drawn up with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), bringing a comprehensive approach to the debt problems of the world's poorest countries a step closer.

The IMF board will consider the proposal next Wednesday. Mr James Wolfensohn, president of the Bank, said the board saw the proposal as "an important and comprehensive step in the right direction".

Suggestions include a trust fund which would assist eligible countries meet debt service commitments, and a call on Paris Club creditors to offer rescheduling terms for up to 80

per cent of outstanding poor country debt.

If the proposal wins the backing of the IMF directors, the two institutions will prepare a further joint document. This would be the basis for discussion with the development committee, said Mr Wolfensohn. He cautioned that "many important aspects will need to be explored and evaluated in partnership with our colleagues in the IMF".

A number of features of the proposal need elaboration, say observers, while some elements of the plan have been criticised by the British charity, Oxfam, and other non-government organisations. Although the IMF has indicated its role will be based on the use of an extended structural adjustment facility as flexible as possible, and on concessional terms, Oxfam has argued that a radical review of the Fund's role in African development crisis is required.

Oxfam is especially critical of the six-year time scale of the two-phase debt relief programme. Although Uganda and Bolivia already have the required track record of sustained reform that is a condition of eligibility, most of the other countries for which the scheme is designed will have a long wait.

The United Nations yesterday launched a \$25bn programme for Africa over the

next decade, the latest in a series of initiatives over the years.

In a live television link from Geneva to Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa, Mr Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the UN secretary-general, said it was a chance for the international community to show its commitment to a continent that was a constant preoccupation for everyone.

"Now is the time for the United Nations and international community as a whole to stand together with Africa," he said. "Now is the time for us to forge a new partnership."

Much of the \$25bn projected for the initiative will be redirected from existing sources

rather than new money, and will attempt to focus assistance on such sectors as education, health, governance, food security, water and sanitation, peace-building, employment and information.

Mr George Saitoti, the Kenyan vice-president, said that a solution had to be found to Africa's debt burden, estimating that the continent's total debt is \$318bn, equivalent to 234 per cent of its total annual export income.

Fifty-four per cent of Africa's population is estimated to live in absolute poverty and Africa is the only region in the world where poverty is expected to increase in the next decade.

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Saturday March 16 1996

Europe fails its jobs test

For those who had hoped to start economic and monetary union in 1999 the downturn in the European economy could not have come at a worse time. But that is far from Europe's biggest problem. The poor economic performance of the 1990s comes on top of its long-standing failure to generate new jobs. This dismal record is undermining the credibility of European governments, both individually and collectively. Hitherto, however, their response has consisted of little more than ritual incantations and futile gestures.

Only last week the European Commission downgraded its forecast for EU economic growth in 1996 to 2 per cent. With Germany probably in recession on one standard definition - that of two successive quarters of negative growth - the chances are that this forecast is already too optimistic. Worse, it follows a long period of poor European performance: between the third quarter of 1991 and the corresponding period of last year, gross domestic product of the European Union expanded at a rate of 1.6 per cent a year and the EU-wide standardised rate of unemployment rose from 3.8 to 11 per cent.

The response of the French finance minister, Mr Jean Arthuis, to the new Commission forecast was to insist that monetary union would go ahead on schedule in 1999. These were brave words. But the difficulties ahead can only increase. Germany's general government fiscal deficit was already 3.6 per cent of GDP last year and is almost certain to exceed the Maastricht treaty reference number of 3 per cent this year as well. The French fiscal position was - and is - still further afield.

Dismal prospects
Since Emu is the flagship of the EU flotilla, those, like Mr Helmut Kohl, who believe further integration is the only route to a secure European peace are bound to be distressed by the dismal short-term economic prospects. They now confront some very difficult choices indeed. But for those who are merely worried by the more mundane failure to deliver prosperity and jobs, it is the slowdown itself, not the effects on Emu, that matters.

Somewhat, European leaders must find a way to reverse the poor performance of their economies. Judged by this standard, what has been on offer in recent weeks is lamentable. Mr Jacques Santer, president of the Commission, has proposed, for example, that savings in this year's EU farm budget might be used to support research and development.

He also wants to raise an extra Euro to push forward spending on trans-European networks. Since these ideas would amount to at most 0.3 per cent of EU GDP, they fall firmly into the category of futile gestures. Meanwhile, Sweden has called together the smaller members of the EU in an attempt to force the inclusion of employment into the agenda of the intergovernmental conference. But what good would this do? The EU is a market economy. Jobs must be created by profit-seeking companies and obtained by income-seeking workers. There will be more people employed only if incentives for both sides improve. In and of itself an employment chapter in an EU treaty would not create a single job, except for those of the people who negotiate it.

Excessive costs

Some people even believe that the EU needs job targets, as if it were part of the old Soviet Union. Others want a "social union" to raise minimum standards, as if the main problem was not the already excessive costs of creating new jobs.

Yet another indication of the subtlety of the thinking on offer comes from Mr Oskar Lafontaine, leader of the German SPD, who has called for cuts in non-wage labour costs, limits on overtime, lower income taxes and restrictions on the influx of ethnic Germans from eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Even where this list does make some sense - on non-wage labour costs - there is too little appreciation of the fact that taxes almost always fall on labour incomes, even if they are supposedly on profits or sales. If the non-wage costs of employment are to be lowered, public spending must also be cut.

What is to be done? It might help if the timetable for Emu were not forcing fiscal deflation in the short term. But the reduction in structural deficits had to come at some point. It would almost certainly be better to do it at the wrong time than not at all.

Above all, European leaders must stop hoping that something will turn up to allow them to escape the hard choices they now face. Still less should they try to learn drunkenly on one another, counting on a European solution to essentially domestic problems. Instead, they should rely on their own intelligence and courage to make the necessary, radical reforms. At present, there is little sign of either. Without them, the prospects for Europe's prosperity and stability are bound to go from bad to worse.

Heavyweight battle for viewers

The Bruno-Tyson fight symbolises the change sweeping broadcasting where everything is available at a price, says Raymond Snoddy

It is hard to imagine a more promising event to launch the UK's first pay-per-view television experiment than the world heavyweight boxing title fight in Las Vegas in the early hours of tomorrow morning British time.

In one corner will be Frank Bruno, the popular British "nice guy" who has kept going long after most would have given up - eventually becoming world champion against the odds. In the other is Mike Tyson, the American thought to be unbeatable despite being not long out of prison after serving a sentence for rape.

The Los Angeles Times said Bruno has a glass jaw and has been on more canvasses than Rembrandt. But the event blends patriotism, live sport, hero and villain - and it can only be seen in the UK by subscribers to the Sky Sports satellite TV channel who have paid extra to view it. The cost of a ring-side television seat is £14.95 (those who booked early paid £9.95).

The event has become a powerful symbol of the radical change now sweeping television as new digital broadcasting technology allows a multiplicity of channels. It is an early but telling step away from universal access television where anyone with a set and a licence can watch, to a world where everything is available at a price for those willing or able to pay.

"Pay-television will be part of the broadcasting landscape when digital arrives for terrestrial, cable and satellite broadcasters," Mr Sam Chisholm, chief executive of British Sky Broadcasting, predicted yesterday.

Pay-per-view is already quite common in the US, but the decision to charge for the fight in the UK has led to criticism that most boxing fans are being excluded. Yet such fights are rarely shown live on terrestrial television, or even on subscription satellite channels. Most world championship boxing matches are shown only on closed circuit television in cinemas with prices of between £25 and £35 a seat.

However, broadcasters will be looking carefully at BSkyB's taking as an indicator of the future viability of the electronic box office. With the calls still going in to BSkyB's subscriber management centre at Livingston in Scotland, the signs yesterday were that the experiment will do much better than the dismal performance expected by many commentators.

The key to expanding pay-TV is digital television, which uses compression technology that allows anything from six to 10 channels to be squeezed into the space of a single channel using traditional analogue technology. This greatly reduces the cost of transmission and expands the number of channels - more than 500 channels are likely to be available over Europe in the next few years.

The first European digital satellite is already in space, part of the Astra system owned by SES, the Luxembourg-based satellite operator. BSkyB has already leased



Striking a blow for pay-television: Boxers Frank Bruno (left) and Mike Tyson at Thursday's weigh-in before the title fight in Las Vegas

capacity and raised the possibility of live pay-per-view broadcasts of all English Premiership football matches in renegotiating its exclusive contract - in addition to screening selected matches on Sunday afternoons and Monday evenings. Fans could buy an electronic season ticket to watch their team every week, or perhaps just away games.

Just such a deal has already been done in Italy by Telepiù, the Italian pay-television company in which Netfield, the Netherlands-based international pay-TV group has a stake. In August, apart from the existing subscription channel service, Telepiù will use digital technology to offer all Italian premier league and first division football matches on its new pay-per-view Telecalcio service.

"The Telecalcio pay-per-view project will give fans a unique chance to benefit from this important sports package in a totally new way," according to Mario Rasini, managing director for the Telepiù channels.

New technical developments will soon give viewers more choice at a price. They include near-video-on-demand where top movies at any one time are each shown on perhaps six channels with staggered starts so the subscriber is rarely more than 20 minutes away from the start of a movie of their choice.

Then there is true video-on-demand when programmes can be ordered instantly from a huge video library down high-capacity cable lines or even the existing telephone network.

Results from 70 video-on-demand experiments round the world are mixed, and it is not yet clear whether enough additional revenues are generated to justify the cost.

But Veronis, Suhler, the US merchant bank specialising in the media, believes that total spending on subscription video services in the US will grow at 8.4 per cent a year, from \$24.1bn in 1994 to \$36.1bn in 1999. Within the total, the bank believes pay-per-view movies will shoot up from a relatively modest \$297m in 1994 to \$1bn in 1999.

Around the world a dramatic period of expansion of pay-TV is poised to take off as a result of the billions of pounds already invested in digital satellites. In Europe, for example, the Murdoch-controlled BSkyB, Bertelsmann and Canal Plus last week formed an alliance to launch new digital television services in Germany and other European countries. Lehman Brothers, the US investment bank, expects pay-TV subscription revenues in Europe this year to reach \$5bn with more

than 16m subscriptions, 11 per cent of homes.

Netfield, owned by Richmond, the tobacco and luxury goods group, and Multi-Choice, a South African company, launched digital pay television services in South Africa and Italy last year and will soon launch a service for the Middle East. Mr Koos Bekker, chief executive of Netfield, believes the future belongs to pay-TV, and that the proliferation of channels will also mean that traditional broadcasting regulation will fall away.

In Latin America - after China the most important market in the emerging world - there should be two competing multi-channel satellite systems covering the continent before the end of the year.

One of them is a consortium involving Mr Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation. The other is Galaxy Latin America, which brings together Hughes Communications, Multivision of Mexico, Chaseros of Venezuela and the Abril Group of Brazil. It will next month launch a 196-channel service to Latin America and the Caribbean. The satellite will be able to address individually more than 80m households. Ms Beatrice Rangel, a vice-president of Galaxy, estimates 20m households in the region have the disposable income to afford pay-TV, including the planned pay-per-view events.

The whole issue of pay-TV poses a difficult dilemma for traditional broadcasters - whether they come from the public service tradition or are commercial channels funded by television advertising. The former are founded on the principle of universality - that everything should be available to everyone who pays the basic licence; the latter that anyone who has the receiving equipment should be able to view.

That could all be about to change as such broadcasters realise they will have to launch new channels, possibly based on subscription. One motive will be to hold on to their share of the audience, but a more important one - particularly for public service broadcasters - will be to win a share of the revenues generated by pay-TV.

The BBC, for example, seems prepared to consider joining the subscription television revolution on proposed new digital terrestrial services. Sir Christopher Bland, the former chairman of London Weekend Television who is about to take over as chairman, has already mused aloud that to protect the BBC's future, it will have to launch its own subscription satellite sports channel.

Thus Europe's broadcasters will be watching the impact of the Bruno-Tyson fight very closely - not only for its impact on Frank Bruno's chin, but also for its impact on BSkyB's bottom line.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Number One Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HL

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Committee of inquiry has a right to reflect

From Mr John Tomlinson.
Sir, Why is it that the British government is unable to allow the truth to cloud its visceral dislike of the European parliament?
The comments it makes on the parliament in its white paper go beyond insult to reach inaccuracies. As chairman of the parliament's first committee of inquiry, I would point out that the fact that this committee was "only" set up in December 1995 does not show that the institution was "slow to use its powers effectively".

Rather, governments could not agree with the parliament on the way such committees should operate until the spring of last year.
Once its powers were defined the parliament spent some months deciding what was the best subject for the first such committee, but why complain? Even "young institutions" have the right to reflect before they act.

Now the committee is established and is at work examining the community transit system, I remain ever hopeful that the comments made in the white paper do not prevent the government from co-operating fully with the parliament in the exercise of its rights, not least if it decides to invite British officials to assist in its work.

John Tomlinson,
European parliament,
Strasbourg,
France

Japan will remain firm on fair trade

From Mr Akinori Yamada.
Sir, On behalf of the Japan Fair Trade Commission (JFTC), I would like to address some points raised in your article ("The watchdog that refuses to bite", February 23).
With regard to the article's reference to "the lack of anti-monopoly enforcement in Japan", the fact is that the JFTC levied a total of \$62m in "administrative surcharges" which roughly corresponds to fines on firms violating Japan's anti-monopoly law last year. By

contrast, the amount of fines imposed by the US anti-trust authorities in financial year 1994 came to \$40m. The JFTC is not "a watchdog that does not bite" (As far as the Japanese media are concerned, characterising the commission in such terms has been out of fashion for some time.) The article implied that the JFTC had previously acquiesced in Fujifilm's anti-competitive actions in the Japanese market. The JFTC has pursued several legal actions in the Japanese film market, including

that which led to its decision in 1991 concerning trade practices perpetrated by Fujifilm in the X-ray film market.
When one compares the state of law enforcement in different nations, one needs to look carefully at the facts rather than be carried away by outdated clichés.

Akinori Yamada, director,
external affairs office,
Fair Trade Commission of Japan,
2-2-1 Kasumigaseki,
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan

Directive reduces flexibility

From Mr Norman Rose.
Sir, The opinion of the advocate general of the European Court of Justice, that the 1993 working time directive was properly adopted by qualified majority voting as a health and safety measure, ("European Court rejects working week challenge", March 12) sets a dangerous precedent.

While there is a health and safety element to some parts of the directive, the majority of its provisions have nothing to do with health and safety at work. The directive is essentially a piece of employment legislation.

Unemployment is rising across the European Union. The priority of the EU ought to be to get people into work and, having achieved that, to keep them in work. This directive will tend to have the opposite effect. It will also hit a large number of employees who will simply see a reduction in their pay as a result of a reduction in their working hours. Many employees depend on overtime.
Unfortunately, the full

implications of the working time directive are not widely understood by the business community. In addition to the maximum 48 hour week, there is a raft of other detail such as the provision for rest periods and holiday entitlements, which will have a significant impact on working practices.
The directive will both reduce the flexibility available to employees to negotiate their working hours, and impose significant additional costs on employers. The European Commission now claims to recognise the link between social policy and competitiveness, but employment legislation of this kind will significantly reduce the flexibility to meet peaks in demand and damage the international competitiveness of companies across Europe.

Norman Rose,
director general,
Business Services Association,
Commonwealth House,
1/15 New Oxford Street,
London WC1A 1NU, UK

Three of the best

From C.J.W. Minter.
Sir, J.D.F. Jones ("Need a (non-alcoholic) drink?", Weekend FT, March 9/10) omits mention of the three best non-alcoholic drinks I know: Campbell's V8 juice, (far superior to any tomato juice, doesn't need the addition of sauces, celery or lemon slices and is a fine accompaniment to vodka), Bitter Kas (a possible substitute for Campari) and plain milk. Needless to say, you won't find any of them in a pub or restaurant.

At home install a water purifier. The result is far better for you (and cheaper) than any designer water. I'm not sure if soggy water bottles are alcoholic or not, but if you liberally splash them into and all round a tumbler, set fire to them and then add ice and water, you'll have a successful simulation of pink gin, nicely caramelised and aromatic.

C.J.W. Minter,
3 Childs Street,
London SW6 9RY, UK

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FT 3

Weekend FT

Troubled times for Japan's financial system mean a lucrative line of business for gangsters. Gerard Baker reports

In the heart of downtown Osaka, in a jumble of streets known as Shimmanouchi, a gleaming new marble and glass building rises from the urban undergrowth.

The "La Forêt Tensho" (in Japan, a bit of French on your front door is a sure indication of glamour and chic within) is a 15-storey palace of luxury apartments. It promises its residents quiet seclusion from the surrounding urban grime and, for the monthly payment of a sum that would buy a house in some parts of Asia, offers peace of a sort.

But to Japan's police and prosecutors, to its bankers and those charged with solving the country's intractable financial mess, La Forêt represents something much more sinister.

On the fifth floor, apartment 507 is, according to the authorities, occupied by a member of one of Japan's organised crime gangs, the *yakuza*. His presence means that the building has become untouchable, a potent symbol of a new and virulent blight affecting the country's financial system.

The occupant of apartment 507 is, in effect, squatting. His presence prevents the building being repossessed. He is in a new and, in these troubled times for Japan's financial system, lucrative line of business for gangsters.

Organised crime is, as you would expect in Japan, just that. Official estimates suggest there are about 75,000 members of *yakuza* gangs throughout the country.

Around the corner from La Forêt in local bars, the *yakuza* are in their pomp. Wearing trade-mark tightly permed hair, white winkle-pickers and covered in tattoos, they still play the role of friend of the little guy, the Robin Hood-like defender of the hardworking citizen from the pushy businessman or the heartless businessman.

In the past they earned their money mostly from traditional business - pimping, gambling, protection and a rake-off from their Robin Hood business.

Their activities were widely accepted - approved even. Provided they kept their activities largely to their own *démimonde*, they could be a useful component of the complex social system that keeps Japan ordered and mostly peaceful.

But as the country has tottered through its most serious post-war financial crisis in the last four years, the role of organ-

ised criminals has moved towards the centre of economic activity. With each new banking collapse, it has become clearer that they are deeply enmeshed in both its origins and the failure to solve it.

"For years organised criminals have been tolerated. But their role in the financial collapse of the last few years has demonstrated the enormous and damaging power they have in the economy," says Retsuke Miyawaki, a former police officer who investigates organised crime for private sector companies. Gangs, he says, are the "fifth estate" of Japanese society.

It has been in buildings such as La Forêt that they have been at their most effective. It was built a few years ago by a local company called Sueno Kosen, one of hundreds of real estate developers in the city that got rich quick in the early years of the so-called bubble economy.

They built dozens of apartment buildings and offices in Osaka, mostly with money bor-

rowed from banks and the country's now infamous housing loan companies. Four years later, the land on which these excesses were built is worth not much more than a third of what many companies paid for it. Sueno Kosen, like a host of others, is technically bankrupt.

The oya-bun demands allegiance from gang members, who must demonstrate it

In the normal course of things, a building such as La Forêt would be auctioned following a developer's bankruptcy and the money raised returned to the lender. But not in Osaka - the city of "Black Rain" and home to the country's largest *yakuza* organisation.

The occupant of apartment 507 has sitting tenants' rights of a particularly exclusive sort, the kind banks are best advised not to argue with.

Police say there are hundreds of similar buildings in Tokyo and Osaka. So far their landlords have made no serious attempt to remove the *yakuza*, so no one knows how they might respond. But they can guess. Dark threats have emanated from gang's "headquarters". Any attempt to dislodge them "will be bloody", said one.

This form of squatting is probably the most lucrative form of business the *yakuza* engage in. Surpassing the coarser attractions of pimping and gambling, real estate occupation has become a multi-billion dollar fund-raiser. By some estimates, the gangs may have a stranglehold on up to 10 per cent of all the country's bad debt collateral, to a value of at least \$30bn.

In an office that overlooks the site of the city's 16th century castle, Osaka police off-

icer Mamoru Hanafuse has the job of uncovering the truth about the *yakuza*'s increasingly aggressive involvement in the financial services industry.

Occupying the entire wall behind him is a magnetic board detailing *yakuza* movements - the most comprehensive map of organised crime in Osaka.

His chart shows how gangs are organised in hundreds of families - with a don, or an *oya-bun* at the top. The *oya-bun* demands allegiance from gang members, who must demonstrate it by acts of good faith and devotion. The families nearly all belong to one of three umbrella organisations.

"The methods of the *yakuza* have progressed in sophistication in line with the progress of the Japanese economy," Hanafuse says.

The irony, he explains, is that this increasing sophistication is at least partly a product of a legal clamp-down on organised crime that began in 1992. In that year, a law was

passed outlawing much of their traditional business - protection rackets, gambling, blackmail and the sex industry. Until then, gangs had been free to operate in their own twilight world, largely unmolested by the authorities.

"They used to be confined to a kind of dark criminal underworld. Now they are out in the broad sunlight of the normal world," Hanafuse says.

Some of the *yakuza* themselves suffered in the collapse of the bubble economy. Many had borrowed money from banks for property speculation and faced bankruptcy. Newspapers were full of the demise of the gangs. One favourite story concerned the popular habit among gang members of cut-

ting off each other's little fingers - usually for some minor infraction of gang rules. Unfortunately, the tell-tale absence of a little finger was of little help when trying to get a respectable job. So by the early 1990s, a new business had been spawned - doctors who made small fortunes from prosthetic surgery - sewing big toes where the fingers used to be.

But for the more resourceful gang members, the country's financial crisis provided an opportunity as much as a threat.

In the lobbies of smart hotels in Osaka and Tokyo, clusters of sharp-suited chatter incessantly into mobile phones.

Continued on Page II



Mob rule: Japan's mafia

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Hugh Dickinson, Dean of Salisbury

No answer to the endless cry

How can the wider community come to terms with the murder of schoolchildren?

No grief so rends the heart as the death of children. Two little girls run over in the street in a Dorset village send such a shock of agony through a small community that many more than those immediately bereaved feel the pain and weep for the pity of it. The whole community is wounded.

In such places the whole community can draw together and mourn. The village church still offers a sacred space and ancient rites which act as a container for the corporate grief, even for those who have no conscious personal religious faith.

Sometimes a pastor with a sensitive heart and a gift for words can find a phrase or an image which touches the wound for everyone in the crowded, dusty space.

They leave feeling what? Not comforted, I think, nor illuminated by the parson's wisdom. Bland consolations are a kind of blasphemy to such grief. There is no easy healing, perhaps no healing ever for such wounds.

Perhaps they feel they have come together in shared pain and their crying out has somehow been heard.

One reporter has told us how long before he reached

the school gates in Dunblane he could hear the keening of the women on the bitter wind of this awful day of March.

That crying out - "Rachel weeping for her children because they are not" - is as old as human history.

The Jews, of all people, know about the death of children; they have the most astonishing repertoire of public mourning preserved in their sacred scriptures and their annual rites.

The Lamentations, written for the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, are perhaps the most eloquent testimonies of grief in any human language.

We still use them in our liturgy as we cry out for Bosnia and Rwanda and Belsen and Abergan, and now for Dunblane. With a wise profundity there is no answer offered to that endless cry.

At the level of personal bereavement the wise counsellor knows that no answer will serve. There are no words in any language with which to address the death of children.

Hoping to find words, I once asked a friend who had been comforted by her local rector after her 17-year-old son had been killed on his motor bike. What had the old priest said

to her? "Oh, no," she said. "He didn't say anything. He just sat beside me and tears ran down his cheeks as he kept repeating, 'That lovely boy, that lovely boy'."

But what can we do at the public level, now that not just Scotland but Britain is a village? We can hear the women weeping and the shocked faces appear on our

There are no words with which to address the death of children

screens while gormless reporters ask people what it felt like.

Am I alone in feeling sick when I heard that the whole of the early edition of BBC Radio 4's news programme, Today, was coming from Dunblane? There is something almost prurient in our glee for other people's grief. It's not easy to sift the pain of living empathy from the lascivious voyeurism somehow excited by the sight of other men and women

wracked by the extremes of human feeling.

But in a secular society we seem bereft of any process, other than endless reportage, to help us work through these deep communal experiences of trauma.

Teams of counsellors can be sent in to Dunblane to help the parents, the children and the wider community. Lots of unwanted offers of help will also arrive from people whose own pathology feeds on the excitement. Politicians of all parties will be keen to have been seen to be deeply concerned.

Dunblane, at least, is fortunate in having a cathedral in which the community can gather and a still living tradition of religion which can hold and bear their communal grief. But personal grief is private and sacred. Public interest is no excuse for intrusion into sacred places.

I suspect that all this media attention and the constant repetition of terrible personal experiences and exposure of terrible personal grief makes it more difficult for a traumatised secular community to do the essential work of corporate lamentation and to devise

meaningful ceremonies with which the communal grief can be held and acknowledged.

Everything gets distorted. There were some simple and spontaneous ceremonies after the Hillsborough disaster which clearly struck a chord in that devastated community. Perhaps football clubs are like villages sometimes. Perhaps a stadium can be a secular cathedral. But with what words, what music?

The British pride themselves on their sense of ceremony. We're good at royal funerals; competent with Remembrance Day observances; capable of grand solemnities after a war.

But what, I wonder, would we do after a defeat or if we had lost a war?

We have no public ceremonies for loss; and what more terrible loss can there be than the murder of children by a mad gunman in a school?

Perhaps we should have a two minutes' silence on all the airways and hear only the voice of Kathleen Ferrier singing Mahler's *Kinder Toten Lieder* and all weep for the pity of it. Abergan, Hillsborough, Hungerford, Dunblane.

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Students log on to the virtual campus

Rebecca Warden takes a tour of the first tailor-made web for study in Catalonia

Early Saturday morning on a train in Spain. Hills, mountains and yet more hills slide past the window as I prepare to visit the world's first entirely virtual campus, the Open University of Catalonia. Designed to make it as easy to study in a small village up in the Pyrenees as in the centre of Barcelona, the OUC opened for business last September.

The idea of the open university has been around for many years, but this is the first to be built from scratch around communications technology.

The first 200 OUC students, scattered across this region of north-eastern Spain, are connected to lecturers, tutors and hi-tech resource centres via a tailor-made web. They can ask questions, compare notes and send work via electronic mail. They can chat in the virtual cafeteria or swot for exams by consulting the virtual library, all without leaving their homes. The pilot group of students is studying business studies or educational psychology and uses Catalan as the language of instruction. By 2000, there will be 11,000 students.

The local press has raved about the OUC, but I am feeling less enthusiastic. "A load of spotty computer nerds in anoraks blathering on about the super information highway," I moan. In reality, the students turn out to be a mixed bunch. Gathered in the small town of Manresa for a rare study weekend, most seem to favour the Spanish smart casual style of dress. Not an anorak or a pimple in sight.

Jordi Agudo had to drop out of his course at the University of Barcelona a few years ago. Now 28 and working for the gas company, he has decided to try business studies at the OUC. Although students do

receive some coursework by post in the shape of conventional textbooks, contact with tutors and teachers is mainly via electronic mail. Agudo is surprised to find he has more frequent and personalised contact with teaching staff now, by means of short messages transmitted down a telephone line, than when attending classes at a conventional university.

Each student is assigned a personal tutor, which is unusual in Spanish universities. Tutors and teachers are drawn from Catalonia's seven state universities, and like the students, the OUC is fitted in around their other commitments. This is possible because e-mail is an asynchronous system, with messages sitting in a mailbox until the recipient attends to them.

Learning via new technology changes the way students relate to each other. The busy social whirl, the student clubs, cheap bars and intense conversations over a cup of tea we associate with university life, are not an option for the OUC students. The students do interact in the virtual campus nonetheless, as the 35,000 connections logged during the first four months show.

So how do these people talk? And what can a group of students who hardly ever meet have in common? Maria Ivern, 38, works with the mentally handicapped in the wine-growing town of El Vendrell and is studying educational psychology. She admits to finding e-mail friendships very different. "I find it hard to talk via a computer," she says, "you don't know what words to use because you don't know how old the other person is." Once she has met someone face-to-face, the talking becomes easier.

Inaki Agkora, however, a teacher in an experimental primary school, finds the anonymity of e-mail

makes people more open. "It doesn't matter who it is you are talking to because you can't see them," he says. "It gets rid of the shyness you sometimes feel in person." For him, the newness of the OUC shows in inconsistencies in course content.

Nati Garcia, 28, a primary school teacher in Barcelona, finds the competitiveness of her days at a small private university missing in her dealings with fellow OUC students. When her computer stopped working recently, she says, advice and offers of help flooded into her mailbox. The very isolation of distance learning encourages co-operation.

Nevertheless, conversations tend to stick to academic affairs. The lack of a student social life may not be all bad though. For mature students - people with jobs and who already have a circle of friends and

maybe children - a new social life is not always a high priority.

Fresh from my encounters with the students, I met the rector for a guided tour of the virtual campus. Professor Gabriel Ferraté, the driving force behind the university, was the head of Catalonia's highly regarded Polytechnic University for 20 years. He combines an interest in all things technical with a love of poetry and motorcycles.

A quick tour of the OUC web shows the design to be user-friendly, combining the usual aids of icon and hypertext with imaginative new features. Care has been taken to reproduce the familiar paraphernalia of student life in a new medium. Thus, there is a notice board full of advertisements for mountain bikes and lifts from A to B and a diary of coming events in

Catalonia, as well as the virtual café where people can engage in on-line conversations.

On the academic side, course units have extra space allocated for students to engage in earnest discussions on their subject. In order to introduce a more personal note, when talking to anyone in the campus, a photo and a CV pop up.

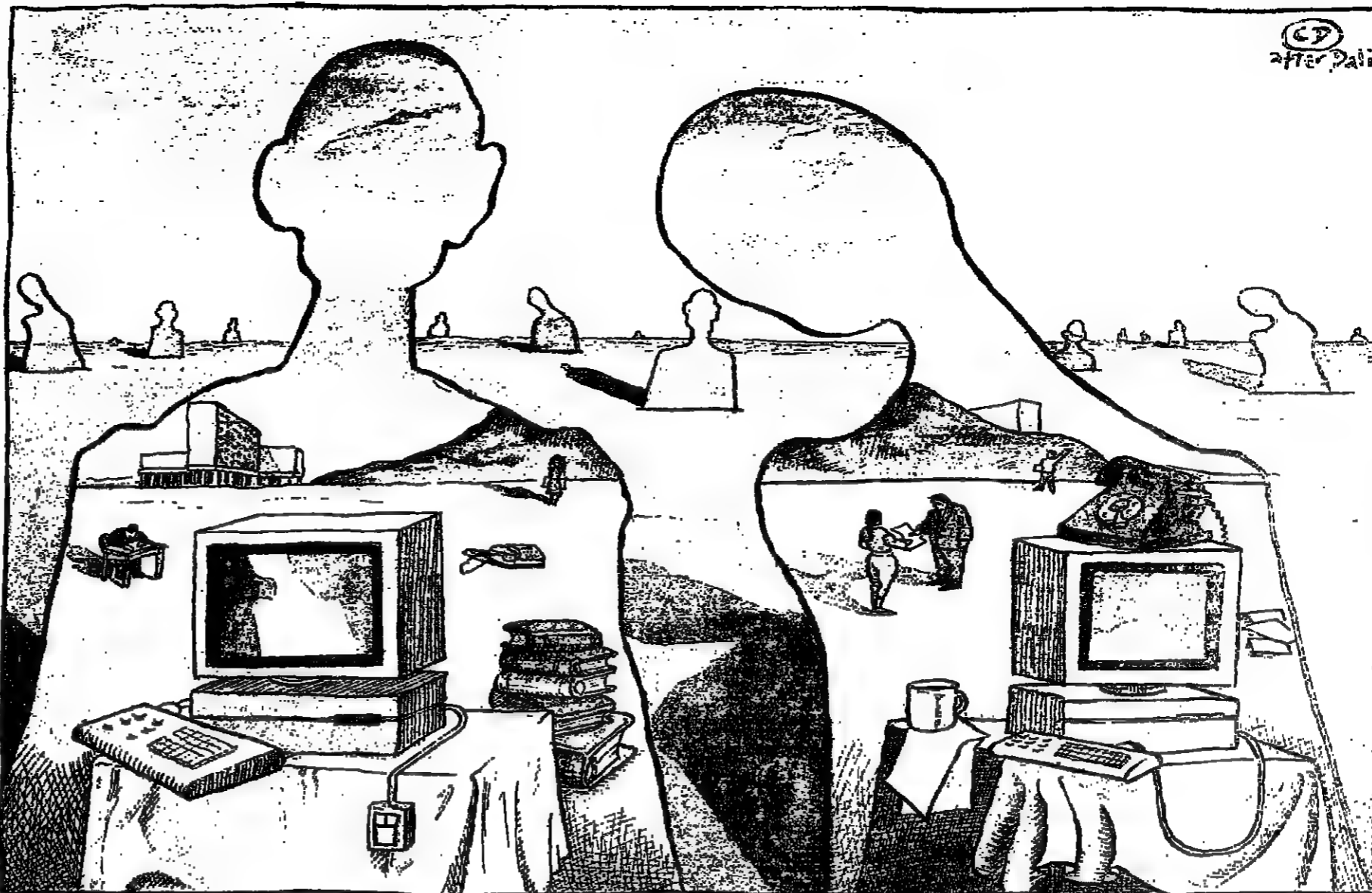
Vice-Rector Francesc Pedró describes their search for continuous innovation as "slightly obsessive". His priority is to find a way of supplementing e-mail as the students' study lifeline. "Students need to discuss things with their teachers and to feel part of a group of people who are all in the same boat," he says.

One way could be by introducing sound and image, possibly by placing small cameras on top of the

students' computers or by some form of asynchronous video-conferencing. Staff are experimenting with ISDN, a technology capable of transporting sound and image as well as data traffic. A second project, expected to bear fruit within two years, is to produce interactive teaching materials in digital form, be it CD-Rom or laser disc.

The OUC looked to other models abroad before designing its own version. Many institutions are testing forms of technology as a way of overcoming problems of distance or timetabling. The Télé-Université of Quebec in Canada and Mexico's IREM/Sels, for instance, beam pre-recorded classes to their students' parabolic antennae by satellite.

Britain's Open University, founded 26 years ago and teaching about 200,000 students, is another obvious point of reference, according to Ferraté. The OU has been experimenting with on-line courses since the late 1980s and now has several which use computer conferencing and e-mail. It was also the first to introduce a comprehensive system of student support.



The widow and her power of prayer

Edward Luce is granted a rare interview with Cory Aquino

Ten years is a long time in politics. In Philippine politics it is eternity. For Cory Aquino, heroine of the "people power" revolution which overthrew the dictator, Ferdinand Marcos, 10 years ago last month, time is a gift from God.

Since stepping down from the presidency of the Philippines in 1992, Aquino has wasted little of the creator's gift. The widow of the leading dissident of the Marcos years, Ninoy Aquino, who was gunned down in Manila in 1983 on return from a three-year exile in the US, does not usually waste much of it on journalists. On this occasion, however, the devout Roman Catholic had unexpectedly given in.

"I don't normally give interviews to journalists," she said apologetically after shaking hands. "Most of them tend to dwell on the same old questions about Imelda Marcos and all of that which tends to be rather boring. I don't think there's anything more I can usefully add."

Throwing my first 10 questions into the nearest mental wastepaper basket, I replied that it must be frustrating to see the media largely ignore the pro-bono work she has undertaken.

The former housewife spends most of her time organising aid projects such as "seed money" rural credit schemes and funding for victims of disasters, including those made homeless by the eruption of Mount Pinatubo in 1991 which so marred the end of her six-year term. Aquino warned to the theme immediately.

"The Philippine media has a different agenda from mine. They often try to get me to say things about the government [of President Fidel Ramos] which I do not want to say. They want me to suggest that he is leading the country back to the martial law era of Marcos which is completely untrue."

Ignoring the tantalising reference to Marcos I asked her to talk about the Aquino Foundation which, in the American tradition, was created to keep alive the ideals of a presidency which has long since elapsed. Aquino talked about the link between Christianity and



Cory Aquino: still has faith

Veronica Claremont

democracy, empowerment and moral responsibility, God and society. It would have been almost vulgar to mention Imelda in that context. The world's most famous shopaholic was quietly forgotten.

Aquino is justly famous, however, for denying her interlocutors the luxury of forgetting the Supreme One upstairs. Hardly a sentence, let alone a speech, goes by without lingering reference to the guiding light of heaven.

The former president's religious faith is probably the main, if not the sole, influence on her political outlook. Such single-minded fervour perhaps explains why the widow was able so convincingly to defeat tanks and generals with little more than her faith a few years ago.

Aquino's widely supposed ignorance of the niceties of economics and political theory has earned her the epithet "a mere housewife" from critics. A brief scan of other

well-known Filipino housewives, however, shows the injustice of such flippancy. She could have been a kleptomaniac. She could have retreated to a gilded convent to mourn her husband. Instead she chose to lead a movement to restore democracy. Not many housewives can put that on their CV.

"When I was president and I was faced with difficult decisions I always thought what would Ninoy have done? What were his principles?" she said. "This was always a great help in starting off my thoughts."

Ninoy's memory might not have been the final word on how to renegotiate the country's heavy debt burden or whether to make the central bank independent, but it gave Aquino the strength to launch a new constitution and to step down in 1992 when many were calling for her to run again. Besides, Ninoy was not known for his grasp of economics.

On a different subject, I had resolved to avoid asking

Aquino about the difficulties she has had with one or two surviving members of her family. As irony would have it, though, the mother of five raised the topic herself. Last year Aquino's unmarried 24-year old daughter, Kris, gave birth to a son. The father, a 47-year-old divorcee, gained celebrity status and stern disapproval from his potential mother-in-law.

The country's scandal-hungry press dined out on it for weeks. In true Philippine fashion Aquino pleaded for the subject to be dropped, then promptly faxed every newspaper a "prayer for Kris" which she had penned for Valentine's Day. On February 14, newspapers carried the prayer on their front pages with a paradoxical plea for the subject to be forgotten.

"Give her [Kris] the grace to be humble. And to admit the emptiness of her life without Your divine guidance. I am truly sorry dear Jesus for sounding impatient at times, even when I pray, forgetting that You, my Lord, love Kris so much more than I do."

To the surprise of outsiders, the media swiftly relegated the subject to the inside pages demonstrating the ability of prayer to bore even the most breathless of readers.

But the episode also demonstrated the country's strange appetite for a dash of piety with its prurience. Aquino could not have symbolised the contradiction more neatly. Unprompted, the former president mused about whether she could have been a better mother.

"It's so difficult to know how to deal with your children," she said wistfully as the interview closed. "Is it better to leave the matter in the hands of God? Or is God asking you to do it for him? I don't think there will ever be a clear answer."

Whether she ever gets a straight reply Aquino could not be accused of giving up the chase. As the most famous prayer-writer in the Philippines, the convent-educated aristocrat likes to genuflect from the front. Only a fool would deny that, in the Philippines, most of the congregation is behind her.

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Countryside Full of Adventures

It is still quiet... but the stud under the supervision of the devilishly skilful horse-herd is already preparing: in a few minutes a breath-taking horse show will begin. Eastern Hungary, including the plain "Alföld", is one of the true guards of ancient Hungarian folk traditions. Folk customs and folk art are existing and living traditions here. On endless Alföld life has remained virtually unchanged for centuries: with its ancient customs, tools, musical instruments and songs it preserves the memory of a more nature-loving world.

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HOW TO SPEND IT

A dog and cat fight over your pennies

The British are soppy about their pets and what they think they need, says Lucia van der Post

The British are soppy about pets. One in two households owns a pet and, until recently, when it came to Britain's favourite there was no contest - "man's best friend" won paws down.

But times are changing. Cats - or kittens - are gaining ground. Dogs have had a poor press (what with pit-bull terriers mauling children and rot-wellers turning psychopathic) - the love affair with Rover is beginning to wear a little thin.

For the first time in years, the dog population is falling. From a high of 7.4m in 1990, it has dropped to 6.5m. In the same period the cat population has risen from 6.7m to 7.05m. The reasons for this are a little mysterious but expense is probably a big factor.

Dogs are more expensive to buy, more expensive to feed and the frills of "doggy life" can set the average household back a mighty penny. Those who have never owned a pet may be astonished to learn that in 1994 the nation spent an estimated £1.4bn on feeding its pets, and that, as with humans, the trend is onwards and upwards.

"Healthy" pet foods, you will be glad to learn, sell better than "unhealthy" ones; properly balanced diets, carefully "nutritionally gauged", are all the rage, but none of this comes cheap. Happy, well-balanced pets need more than food. They also need accessories. Last year about £78m was spent on making pet life more worth living - on veterinary care, insurance and grooming. The maladjusted might need some counselling. For the devoted pet owner the expense is limitless.

Buying the pet is merely the start. You could spend as little as £45 on a mongrel from a dog's home and anything from £200 upwards on a pure breed puppy. But after that it is maintenance that is the real killer. For cats it could run to as little as £250 a year, while even the least demanding dog would set a household back at least £400 a year.

Where you buy the pet is crucial. A leading vet tells me that while it is "very nice to rescue a pet from a shop, frequently the pets are not as healthy as they should be. New owners are often badly misinformed about their state." If you know which breed you want she recommends buying from a breeder.

A good place to meet them is at cat or dog shows - you can get the feel of the sort of people they are and the kind of outfit they run. The big, well-known breeders (The Kennel Club, 1 Clarges Street, London W1, supplies addresses) are not necessarily better - and will undoubtedly be more expensive - than the smaller establishments. Buying pets from the animal rescue centres is charitable but although some of the animals may be well-adjusted and healthy, you could equally well end up with a melancholic social misfit.

The best centres, such as the RSPCA, insist on doing a home-check first, and their fee includes a micro-chip to enable you to keep track of the animal and neutering. A bitch costs £50, a male dog £70, a female cat £35 and a tom-cat £32.

The image-conscious should be aware that the dog you choose does indeed say more about you than you might like the world to know. In lower-income neighbourhoods there is a greater preponderance of Staffordshire bull terriers and rottweilers while in the gentler reaches of, say, Fulham and Chelsea golden retrievers and King Charles spaniels are more to the local taste.

Once bought, there is no end to the opportunities for extra expenditure. In these days of proliferating mail order companies it is only right and proper that doggy (and moggie) aids should come easily and speedily through the post.

The Bones Dog and Catalogue (Bones Mail Order, The

Upper Mill, Coin St Aldwyns, Gloucester GL7 5AJ. Tel: 01285-750 007) offers almost every aid you could think of and many you wouldn't want to - from the leather mouse to the eminently practical waterproof backed towel ("protect your car seat" and "let your dog snuggle up by the fire in this versatile dog towel"). All the products have been personally tested by Maisie, the cocker spaniel, Lily the lurcher and Sidney, the Abyssinian cat.

The smart dog does, of course, need a wardrobe and here Bones does not let you down. There are cat collars for town and country (£10.75 a time), fleecy slippers (no doubt to act as decoys from the real thing) and a complete range of coats and bedding. Smart, conservative country dogs might like to be seen out and about in their very own waxed green jacket (£20 from George's of Chelsea, 8 Cale Street, London SW3 3QU) while more hip types could go for the black leather jacket blazer-style (£34.99 for the smallest size from Selfridges, Oxford Street, London W1). If urban life has made your dog wary of extreme weather, there is a fake fur-lined tartan raincoat at Harrods for £24.

For seekers after the unusual, George's of Chelsea caters for what it calls the sophisticated urban dog rather than rough country ones. You could buy your beloved Fido anything from a jewel-encrusted lead to a fancy outfit while for owners there are such delights as doggy portraits and doggy cushions.

There is no end of suggestions for that important part of the doggie ritual - walks. From designer dog leads (exclusive to Harrods are the Moschino collars, £45, and leads, £55, in red, black or brown) to the eerily kitsch electronic flashing collar (a built-in lithium battery makes sure your dog can be seen in the dark), available among other things at £13.99 from Canac Pet Products (tel: 01373-884775).

Comfy Pet and People Products, 2/4 Parsonage Street, Bradninch, nr. Exeter, Devon, EX6 4NW (tel: 01392-881286) is the place for the seriously useful accessory. Take the Dog Dri Bag into which you slip the wet dog and there he stays until dry and clean. (From £11.50 for the smallest size for toy breeds, through small for terriers and dachshunds, mediums for spaniel-sized dogs and large for labradors, at £26.50).

And when it comes to Christmas let no pet be forgotten - Bones Dog and Catalogue has an "adorable little tartan stocking... filled with delicious cat treats or scrummy dog treats". Pet owners (or indeed pets) desperate for a breather might like to know that pet hotels are a proliferating business. Take the Dogchester. Here the urban dog, reined in by park restrictions and leads, can run free in a country house and garden. At the London branch (contact Sara Short on 0171-706 1438) there is room for seven dogs but at weekends Short will transport the dogs to her country house for home-cooked food, woodland walks and lots of fresh air. (Somewhat mysteriously, though, no doberman pinchers will be accepted.) Charges from £12 a day.

British pet owners can look forward to the arrival of PetsMart, which is due to hit these shores next year. There will be no need to scour the neighbourhood or the mail order listings for a range of individual services as PetsMart will provide everything the devoted pet-owner could want all under one roof. From posh pet foods to veterinary services, obedience classes, photographic studios, adoption centres and grooming parlours, it will be the one-stop shop for the busy pet-lover.



□ Above: No, the garden shed won't do - every good dog deserves a bed. Hawthorn Interiors does solid pine beds, hand-stained and French polished, with turned legs - available in three sizes "to suit most dogs and homes", £110, £115 and £125 (plus £16 p.p.) from Hawthorn Interiors (tel: 01246-582381)

□ Far left, top: Pet sheets to keep hair, mud, grit, sand and all the other ills that pet-owning homes are heir to off the sofas and the car seats - in four sizes, in cream, olive, grey or buff, they range in price from £5.95 for the smallest (90cm by 60cm) to £23.50 for the largest (209cm by 152cm). By mail order from Over The Top (tel: 01605-676622)

□ Far left, below: Sara Davenport, whose gallery at 206 Walton Street, London, SW3, (tel: 0171-225 2223) specialises in 19th century doggy oil paintings, in her home surrounded by pet memorabilia

□ Left: Every Fido worth his Pedigree Chum needs his own personalised, made-to-measure collar. Green Farm Trading (tel: 01474-737877) does them in navy, yellow, red, green or blue webbing with a choice of seven colours for the embroidery. In three sizes, ranging in price from £25.50 (for Jack Russells, West Highland whites and other small dogs) and £26.50 for medium-sized dogs (springer spaniels, shelties etc) to £27.50 for large dogs (labradors, alsatians, setters and the rest). Postage is £2.50 extra

□ Below: Waxed green jacket (to match your own version) in sizes 8in to 24in (measured from collar to base of tail). From George's of Chelsea, 8 Cale Street, London SW3 3QU. From £20 (tel: 0171-581 5114)

Drawings: Margie Keedy

But for some pet owners nothing mass-produced or cheapskate will do. For the connoisseur of pet comfort a visit to Christie's auction on March 23 will be *de rigueur*. Where else could you find such a luxurious abode as a kennel in neo-classic grey and gilt with a domed top and foliate hall filial for around £5,000? And for the still besotted there will be another 100 or so cat and dog-related objects - 18th and 19th century oil paintings, as well as bronzes and sculptures.

Those who cannot get to the auction can find doggy pictures from Sara Davenport at 206 Walton Street, London SW3, where she runs the only gallery that specialises in 19th century oil paintings of dogs.

If you are willing to part with £1,500 to ensure Fido has a good night's sleep, the miniature green and gold Harrods bus could be the very thing - it has an upper compartment for grooming aids, a middle

section for sleeping in and the "engine" section holds his wardrobe of accessories. For those whose pets are bereaved, aggressive, suffering from separation anxiety or simply socially maladjusted, the Anthony Clare of the canine world is Roger Mugford, whose Animal Behavioural Clinic in Chertsey (tel: 01353-566989) is sought after by owners far and wide. His practice specialises in sorting out "dotty dogs" but your dog must first be referred to him by your local vet.

When your pet finally heads for the great kennel in the sky do not just consign him to a plot at the end of the garden - Cjwyd-based Pet Funeral Services, for instance, will send him to his maker with dignity and discretion (tel: 01352-710600). Prices are about £200 for burying a cat or a rabbit while a horse would be nearer £600; cremation costs about £55. The Silvermere Pet Cemetery is at Byfleet Road, Cobham, Surrey (tel: 0181-546 7891).

Unwilling recipient of Armani's mantle

Jil Sander is 'hot', but the Italian designer is fighting to retain his status as creator of the most-desired clothes, reports Marion Hume



Sweet simplicity by Giorgio Armani

The clothes you see here are by Jil Sander and Giorgio Armani and they will not arrive in stores until the autumn.

Perhaps this is a good thing. No matter what one's budget is, spending around £2,000 on a coat takes more than a moment's thought, while shelling out for sweaters that could cost around £500 apiece might require a few months of saving up first.

Giorgio Armani and Jil Sander both share the idea that less is more - unless one is talking about price tags. They each create understated clothes in sumptuous fabrics, which cost a great deal more than one might expect for a simple sweater or the most unattention-grabbing skirt.

This has not put off customers, however, ranging from barristers to Hollywood studio executives. The attraction of these clothes is that they make a near-silent promise of fine quality.

The clothes of Armani and Sander share many things; obsessions with fabric innovation, paring down and a lack of adornment. It is no surprise then that Sander is being dubbed "the new Armani" and that she is being looked at to define late 1990s dressing in the way that Armani, more than any other designer, defined the 1980s.

But Armani does not want to pass on his mantle, and Sander, for her part, is none too keen to receive it. Armani, who says of Sander that she has learnt much from looking at his clothes, is, unsurprisingly, not ready to be eclipsed. Meanwhile, Sander does not want to be viewed as some kind of wunderkind; she is 32 to Armani's 61 and showed her first catwalk collection a year before he did, in 1974.

Armani has, of course, built a hugely powerful global empire. In financial terms, Sander is still the minnow. Her latest turnover figure is more than £160m, while for 1994, Armani turned over £8.6bn. But in creative terms, Sander is "hot". Giorgio Armani (who is still fantastically successful, with global sales in 1995 up a staggering 30 per cent on 1994) is not.

It used to be that one went to Milan for Armani and, indeed, to witness Armani versus Versace (or the battle of the lady and the tramp). Now, while both Armani and Versace wield huge muscle and open more and more shops across the world, the creative force that makes the fashion pundit's heart beat faster comes from neither of them. In Milan last week the three must-have-at-any-cost hot tickets were Prada, Gucci and Jil Sander.

From Gucci came blue, military-detailed, 1970s-style trouser suits, presented in such a way that one was temporarily convinced they were the ultimate in desirable fashion. From Prada came V-neck sweaters and flared skirts in olive and burgundy, bewilderingly reminiscent of my 1970s sixth form "uniform".

From Jil Sander came beguilingly simple clothes that became more wearable as the show progressed. Rare in fashion is the show where you cannot help but wish you were standing backstage with a bin bag, piling all the clothes in so that you could take them away to keep.

Armani's collections, both under his younger Emporio Armani label and his eponymous label, were assured, confident, sleek, immaculate... but they did not raise the heartbeat. Armani's most loyal army of followers will not care, for here were reliable corporate clothes for executive lives just like theirs.

However, the most recent Armani collection will not woo back those women customers who have moved on. Armani is still recognisably Armani. Instead, they crave even more stylish up-market anonymity which they find in the designs of Jil Sander, whose clothes have no immediately identifiable signature except that they look so good.

According to Sander stockists, most of her clients do not seek publicity and would get no pleasure from appearing on a "who wears what list".

Years ago, before he conquered every smart shopping street on earth, Giorgio Armani had a shop-in-shop in Browns, in London's South Molton Street.

Today, Jil Sander has a shop-in-shop there. Former customers who followed Armani to his own boutique are once again to be seen in Browns. They are buying Jil Sander. One such customer is actress Lauren Bacall. A long-time Armani-wearer, she is now a convert to Sander style.

And perhaps Armani is getting nervous. While the press pushed and shoved to get into



Sander's interpretation of the librarian look



Sander's austere simple look for evening



Go to work in Sander's plain grey suit



Creamy cashmere for a warm feeling from Sander

Photographs: Neil McManis

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FINANCIAL TIMES

Corporate women who do not want to dress like the rest are rejecting it

zine, or in case a letter pondering whether one does not understand the brand is sent to the editor of one's newspaper.

Last week, just before the house lights went down and the lights beneath Armani's purpose-built underground catwalk came up, a rumour was flying that the audience was being filmed on video. Had we not heard that someone had been reprimanded for yawning at the Emporio Armani show earlier in the week? According to the Chinese whisper, he had watched a film of the audience to gauge reactions. No doubt this was just silly gossip. Its significance is that people believed it might, possibly, be true.

But hyper-sensitiveness is not stitched into the fabric of a suit. What goes on in the fashion firmament does not matter to the woman with money in her wallet and the need to find something smart to wear. Armani's brand of beige, his red, tailored suits for autumn are not quite as "fashion forward" as they once were, partly because he has been so successful - and so imitated in every high street store - that they can look as if they come from Principles.

Armani invented the latter-day corporate uniform. Now the gutsiest of corporate women who do not want to dress like the rest are beginning to reject it, to look for something else to wear. Enter Sander.

In the next year, Jil Sander expects to open her own shop in London to complement her stark white-on-white flagship on Avenue Montaigne in Paris. Giorgio Armani, meanwhile, is this year adding shops in Jakarta, Bangkok and Mexico City, as well as four new shops in Japan to bring his retail empire, for Giorgio Armani boutiques alone, to 48.

There is still much to desire with a Giorgio (and Emporio) Armani label, as well as much to crave from Jil Sander. But if you're in the market for a £2,000 winter coat, it's simple: you just have to pay your money and make your choice.



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Rugby Union / Huw Richards

The best – and dullest – side in Europe

One thing Will Carling, the England rugby captain, has never lacked is a sense of timing. It was his ability to time a pass to commit an opponent and put the receiver into a gap which first marked him out as an exceptional talent – and would also, combined with his straight running and solid defence, have made him a magnificent rugby league player.

Similar judgment has informed his decision to stand down as England captain after eight seasons. Few sportsmen know how to go when people will ask why, rather than why not. He leaves after leading England 59 times and impressing himself on the role as only two previous leaders – the 1920s flanker Wavell Wakefield and good-old-Bill Beaumont of the late 1970s and early 1990s – have done.

He should go out on a winning note today, adding a fourth Triple Crown to the third Grand Slam and three championships England have taken under his captaincy.

Ireland showed an immense improvement to beat Wales two weeks ago, but it is unlikely that they

can withstand an England pack fresh from victory over Scotland at Murrayfield.

That 18-9 win two weeks ago epitomised both the vices and the virtues of Carling's time in charge.

It was the definitive demonstration of how to shut your opponents out of a game. An England pack displaying immense control, discipline and organisation showed that it remains the major force in European rugby.

England needed a result. And they had a duty to make life difficult for a Scottish team who, in the end, were not good enough to take the Grand Slam many wished for them after they had lit up the season with their imagination and creativity. It is also true that, for historic reasons, England are fated to be unpopular.

It is perhaps natural that England players have noted the number of rugby writers who are Scottish or Welsh – (guilty 'mud') – and seen an element of Celtic whinge in the response to their win at Murrayfield. But that hardly explains English writers and fans who were just as unhappy. No team which plays as

England did last Saturday will ever be popular except with their committed followers. For many Englishmen there is frustration at unfulfilled potential.

Rugby union's central problem as a spectacle is that it is too easy for a team bent solely on stopping the opposition to make it virtually unwatchable. England did that, with immense efficiency. Their advance on the Triple Crown has something of the quality of Argentina's soccer World Cup run in 1986 – getting the results, but by strangulation rather than creation.

The England pack remains European rugby's equivalent of the West Indies four fast bowlers system – a weapon which makes life impossible for opponents. But the West Indies did not also require Viv Richards to bat like Geoffrey Boycott. England have confined a potentially outstanding back division to defensive duties.

There is a strong case to be made that, while their greatest triumphs came afterwards, England lost something for good when they fell at Murrayfield six years ago. There was

always a sense of inhibition after that, of a team which never quite trusted itself and regarded its game plan as gospel rather than guidance.

They always wanted to be absolutely sure nothing could go wrong before shifting out of safety-first gear. This was enough in Europe, but an extra level of creativity, imagination and the nerve needed to take the occasional risk was needed against the best southern hemisphere sides.

With a few of these qualities Carling's England might have been the best team in the world. Instead they have been the dullest – although unquestionably the best – team in Europe. Perhaps a new captain will inject some of those qualities. But who? Tim Rodber is out of favour while Ben Clarke's half-hour in charge against Wales served only to underline Carling's qualities.

Two contenders stand out. Phil de Glanville has probably been the best centre in England for the last two seasons and is an outstanding captain of Bath. But his problem is getting into the team. He must either displace Carling, who wants to carry on and



Carling: never lacked a sense of timing

Cricket / Simon Hughes

The lessons for England

How can Sri Lanka beat us? asked the man staring glumly at the last rites of England's World Cup quarter-final last Saturday. "We taught them the game." This is the kind of arrogance that lingers in the subconscious of England's cricketing fraternity and ultimately represents one of its greatest enemies.

An Englishman might have invented the jet engine but that does not automatically give the nation a divine right to control its evolution.

Football is a useful parallel with cricket. English administrators were guilty of a terrible insularity. Once the game had penetrated Europe and South America it galloped ahead, leaving the founders in its wake. England did not even qualify for the 1994 World Cup in America.

The same is starting to happen in cricket.

England's defeat by Sri Lanka meant they failed to reach the semi-finals for the first time in the 20-year history of the competition, prompting recriminations and inquests.

"What's wrong with English cricket?" "Who is to blame?" "Isn't it about time we overhauled the system?" It is asked.

It might be more constructive to look at how other countries have developed their cricket base and look at how the game is expanding with an even greater potential.

Until 1983 international cricket was nothing more than an exclusive club with six members – England, Australia, India, Pakistan, West Indies and New Zealand. Amid much initial protest Sri Lanka were given Test status and, within a decade, South Africa had been welcomed back and Zimbabwe introduced.

This year's World Cup has involved 12 teams, with the non-Test playing countries Kenya, Holland and UAE invited for the first time. Kenya proved the value of this enterprise with their extraordinary victory over the West Indies which seemed to galvanise both nations.

West Indies immediately overcame the two strongest teams in the competition – Australia and South Africa – and Kenya used the moment to kickstart an awareness campaign among their 22m blacks. The game in Kenya has been predominantly maintained by wealthy Asians, since the country gained independence in 1963, importing top Indian players, upgrading grounds.

That is about to change. There are now six blacks in the national team, their exceptional eye and natural athleticism recognised and nurtured by enlightened coaches.

"We lived near a cricket club but we weren't members," says Steve Tikolo, their brilliant batsman. "So we played down a potholed road using maize cobs and sticks for balls and bats."

President Arap Moi gave cricket official sanction last week with a televised speech of congratulation after the West Indies win. With perfect timing the Nairobi Provincial Cricket Association that day dispatched its first full-time cricket coach – sponsored mainly by Voluntary Service Overseas and the Lord's Taverners – into the uninitiated masses.

After two days he had identified several schoolboys with prodigious natural talent. Within a decade Kenya could

become the tenth Test playing country. They have proved their ability and depth not only with consistent totals above 200 in the World Cup but also in the African nations tournament which they won without any of their main squad.

They have at least eight superb grounds replete with stands and pavilions and unblemished pitches that would break the sturdiest bowlers' hearts. Conrad Huete, the former West Indies opener, is now employed by the MCC as cricket development officer in Africa, and suggested the standard of Kenyan cricket and the excellent facilities made it a good candidate for eventual Test status.

Peter Lever, England's bowling adviser, was similarly impressed when he spent a month there before Christmas. Aware of the huge potential and value of widening the world cricket net, Dr Ali Bacher, chief of the United Cricket Board of South Africa, regularly channels funds and provincial teams Kenya's way.

They have correctly emphasised the grass roots in their development programme, introducing the sport to a number of state schools. There are great similarities between the current state of Kenyan cricket and the situation I found in Colombo when I spent a season there in 1979 – uninhibited talent, manicured grounds, and a lack of first-class structure and world acknowledgement.

Sri Lanka's greatest asset at that stage was its schools cricket, which was extraordinarily competitive and drew large crowds. The annual Royal-Thomasian, a three-day match between the island's 20 oldest schools, attracted 30,000 spectators each day and there were street parades. But there was nothing much for the players to aspire to apart from a weekend club circuit and some inter-company matches.

The introduction of the Asia Cup, in which Bangladesh, another emerging cricket nation, also participates, gave the Sri Lankans more purpose, and enticing English counties and occasional international teams to tour put them on the fast track to success.

What a revelation they have been in this World Cup. Little more than 10 years since becoming a fully fledged Test nation. Untrammelled by tradition and old-fashioned approaches, their whirling batsmen vaporised the opening attacks of India and England.

Now they are in the final at Lahore tomorrow, where they meet an Australian side with their tails up after defeating the West Indies by five runs in a sensational finish on Thursday.

Chasing a victory target of 208 in 50 overs, the West Indies were dismissed for 202 runs in the last over.

Whatever happens, it is the culmination of a wonderful year for Sri Lanka during which they beat New Zealand and Pakistan in Test series and both home and away and eliminated the West Indies to reach the finals of Australia's World Series Cup. Global TV networks such as Rupert Murdoch's Star and Connecticut doct's ESPN are investing heavily in overseas cricket, seeing it as a sport with a huge future in the third world.

If the English game does not equally broaden its outlook it may be left further behind.



Branco: 'I hope they don't expect me to score with every free kick' Aspin

Soccer / John Perlman

The bright lights of Brazil

Juninho halls passing travellers from a large poster at Middlesbrough station, urging them to stay off the tracks and "leave the dangerous crossing to me".

Outside the Riverside stadium, the Express Cuisine foodstand offers passing fans a choice between a Brazilian Duo Burger (two patties laced with "hot samba sauce"), and a giant hotdog called a Juninho Plonker. In the club shop there is "Brazil-manila" – Brazil flags, Brazil scarves, "new Juninho/Branco Bronx hats".

Inside the stadium, on an icy Wednesday night on Teesside, more than 16,000 have turned out to watch a reserve team match. Actually, 21 of the players are more or less extras in this show – all eyes are really on one player.

A chant of "Branco-oh, Branco-oh" erupts – "there's only one Claudio Ibrahim Vaz Leal Branco" does not really roll off the tongue – as the muscular player wearing the orange-red number 11 shirt strolls forward to line up a free-kick from 40 metres out.

Branco's left-footed drive sends the ball bobbling over the goal-line wide of the target but the applause for the effort is warm. A goal against Leicester City in this Pontins League Division Two game would be a bonus, but what the crowd has gathered to celebrate is Branco's promise.

"In time I will be able to fulfil what they expect of me," Branco says afterwards. "But I hope they don't expect me to score with every free kick."

Football fans who watched the last World Cup probably do. With Brazil's quarter-final against Holland on a knife-edge after the Dutch came back from two goals down, Branco stepped up to take a free kick from a similar position and lashed the ball inside the goalkeeper's left post for a spectacular winner.

Middlesbrough manager Bryan Robson does not mention free kicks when asked what he hopes to get from the man he got on a free transfer from Porto Alegre – for wages

of £20,000 a week. Branco played in Brazil's World Cup-winning team at left-back, coming into the side after the brilliant Leonardo was sent off against the US. He wants to play his Premier League football on the left side of midfield.

Robson says the Brazilian can play in midfield or as a left-side sweeper. Wherever he plays though, his key role will be to help Middlesbrough get the best out of their first Brazilian buy, the striker Juninho. "Branco reads the game really well and I want him to feed the ball to Juninho further forward," Robson says.

Branco and Juninho have played together in the Brazilian squad, but it has been a bit

Brazilians 'have the right mental attitudes for English football'

Like a warm but brief chat in the hotel lobby between one man who has just checked in for a long stay and another who is busy settling his bill.

Branco, 32 in April, has played with distinction in three World Cups. But he was left out of the Brazilian squad for last year's Copa America and is unlikely to add to his 83 caps. Juninho, 23, is part of a post 1994 Brazil that is rebuilding with confidence.

Even so, Juninho's presence on Teesside was probably what clinched the Branco deal. "The fact that Juninho is here makes a big difference," says Gianni Paladini, the Italian agent who represents both.

Paladini says family company should be enough to sustain the Brazilians, who live a quiet life off the pitch. Juninho, who has just bought a house in a quiet village south-west of Middlesbrough lives with his mother and father. Branco has come to England with his wife Stella who is fluent in English – and

his 10-month-old son. "Most of the time I like just to stay with my wife and my family," he says.

The biggest challenge of playing in England, he says, is the intensity of the game: "Here 90 minutes is 90 minutes, it is 100 per cent football. They do not stop like on the continent and you have to concentrate all the time."

Robson, who uses Bolivian Jaime Moreno (signed last season) as his interpreter for Juninho and Branco, says Brazilians "tend to have the right mental attitudes for English football".

But in the opening flurries of Middlesbrough's match against West Ham last Saturday, you could not say the same thing about some Englishmen. A defensive blunder presented West Ham with a gift goal in the first minute.

Branco started on the bench and by the time he was brought in Middlesbrough were trailing by two. Not much he or Juninho – who had come in 10 minutes earlier – could do about that.

On the pitch, Branco signals his dismay at a poor pass or a misunderstood run with a little waft of his right arm. It looks like a gesture of resignation, but Branco – for all his little shrugs and soft-spoken manner – strikes one as a player who hates losing. And he hates it even more when he cannot do anything about it.

"No good," he said sadly outside Upton Park as his team headed north pondering their 10th defeat in 11 matches. "Fifteen minutes is not enough to do something. I need more time." There is not a great deal of time left. Middlesbrough have just eight games left to play – the first of four at the Riverside takes place this afternoon against Nottingham Forest. Middlesbrough's early season dreams of a UEFA Cup place – at the start of December Middlesbrough were fourth – are now gone. But a Branco free kick, lashed in left-footed from 30 metres out, would go some way towards making up for it.

Athletics / Pat Butcher

Du'aine's man-killer world

Glenn Davis, the 1962 and 1966 Olympic 400 metres hurdles champion used to call his event "the man-killer". But Davis had already switched from the 400 metres flat race, because it was too hard.

There are a lot of invalids out there who know how he felt, and Du'aine Ladejo, the European champion, has been among them.

"It's the most demanding event there is, because it's a mixture of endurance and speed, and that's a lethal combination. It's almost a flat-out sprint but you need control at the same time. You have to know where the line line is when you step across it and go into overdrive," he says.

If that sounds as if there should be a government health warning slapped on the starting blocks, consider the ample evidence of fall-out from the one-lap event. No one who saw Derek Redmond's demise at the Barcelona Olympics in 1992 will ever forget it. In one of the most emotive incidents seen on a track, Redmond's Achilles' tendon ruptured, and he crashed to the ground midway through his semi-final; only to get up and hobble

determinedly to the finish line, ultimately helped by his father, who vaulted the retaining wall to support his tearful son on the last half lap that he would ever complete in anger.

David Grindley, who set a British record in the final Barcelona semi-final has sat out the last two seasons with his own Achilles' tendon injury, although thankfully he is coming back, buoyed by a recent 46.35-second run in South Africa.

Most telling of all has been the yo-yo career of Roger Black, who has at least managed to engineer his stress fractures and tendon injuries to fit between successive victories in the European championships of 1986 and 1990.

As coach to Black, Mike Whittingham has had more opportunity than most to study the depredations of the event. "To my mind, 400 metres injuries fall into three distinct brackets.

"Genetic injuries, which I think Roger's is, that's to say, he started in athletics with a physical problem, which wasn't discovered until later, when it had been aggravated by a lot of training too early. Then, there are the mechanical problems, where bad technique or bad habits lead to injuries; then there is straightforward wear and tear.

"I don't think people are training any harder, but I think the calendar is overloaded nowadays, concentration of events in a professional sport means athletes run too many events too close together.

"I also think it's the hardest event in championships, with races on successive days. For example, in the Olympics, athletes have to race flat out on four days. No other event does that. God knows how Michael Johnson does it, and runs the 200 metres afterwards."

Whittingham also warns of the dangers of athletes moving up too soon from 200 to 400

metres. "The pressures for immediate success in commercial athletics are such that if a 200 metre runner is not getting results, he or she feels they have to move up, because the relay is an easier option to get on an international team.

"So they increase the quality and the quantity of their training, and you should never do the same together, it should be progressive. There are too many training squads bringing youngsters on far too quickly, without a thought to where they will be in 10 years. So you get a situation where Christie and Regis are our only regular sub 20.5sec 300-metre runners, whereas we have eight 400-metre men capable of sub-45.5sec, which equates to 20.5."

Fortunately, Ladejo does not fit into any of these gloomy scenarios. His final last season was, Whittingham agrees, the result of minor problems, rather than career-threatening injuries.

That may have something to

do with his relatively late arrival as a force in world athletics. As an excellent all-rounder at prep school, he was urged by his mother to take up a scholarship opportunity at a US university, where his talents at American football and basketball took precedence. Thus, in contrast to Black, who won the European junior title 11 years ago, aged 19, Ladejo was 23 before he broke through as a world class athlete.

Ladejo exploded on the British consciousness exactly two years ago when he won the

European indoor title, a feat he emulated last weekend in Stockholm, breaking Michael Johnson's track record with 46.12 seconds.

Yet Ladejo might have left the sport almost as quickly, given that his expansive personality led to him acting offensively and hosting a successful TV series, *Du'aine's World*.

He says: "It got good ratings, and I was offered a second series, but I had to turn it down. My primary concern is athletics, and if that had suffered, it would have been a disaster. I can always do the TV later. I felt I had to get back to the issue that got me there in the first place."

Next stop, Atlanta, and the hardest job of all – beating Michael Johnson on his home turf.

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BOOKS

No dolls for Silvia

Silvia Rodgers ought to have gone into politics long ago. The questions are which party and in which country. She was born and bred a communist. Nothing wrong with that in the circumstances of place and time.

Polish, Jewish, atheist, pacifist and one of nature's feminists, she spent her early childhood in Berlin before the second world war, learning Russian long before she learned English. Her mother and father were active members of the German communist party, though the mother was even more committed than the father. The family, including a baby brother, ressembled in London shortly before war broke out.

Yet it is the influence of those early years that stands out in this remarkable autobiography. Her parents took every part of communism seriously: no dolls for Silvia, only Meccano. If the parents had known that Meccano was invented in Britain, she writes, they would have denounced it as imperialist and given her some other engineering tool. Even the solace of a teddy bear was removed to mark the end of her childhood. She retreated into the poems of Heinrich Heine rather than English children read *Winnie the Pooh*. And, apart from the lament for the absence of dolls, she swallowed the politics lock, stock and barrel. The main enemy was the German Social Democrats.

It was not all that much better in London. The family

RED SAINT, PINK DAUGHTER
by Silvia Rodgers
Andre Deutsch £17.99, 282 pages

despised the British Communist Party and had little sympathy with the Labour Party. Moreover, the family itself was not happy. This is a story of alienation not only within countries, but within a family group. Much of it is a tirade against the mother who survived till the late 1970s, though there is also more than one swipe at the father. "There is no matriarchal society anywhere and never has been," writes the feminist in Silvia Rodgers.

Not all the stories hang together. She notes her lesson from Tolstoy - "beware the roses-samples of patriotism" - yet she admits to not being immune to them herself: for example, in state ceremonies. She recalls joining in a popular German song in the 1930s - *Mit dem Roller nach Adels Adaba* ("Off to Adels Adaba on a Scooter") - then discovers years later that her husband, Bill, sang something similar in Liverpool.

When she arrived at her London school and the girls sang *Jerusalem*, she was astonished. "No one gave any sign of being in the least interested in either Palestine or the Jews," nor did they have any awareness of the hymn's sexual imagery.

Much of the book is a serious attack on English racial and social snobbery. She quotes extensive evidence that the British government in the late 1930s went to considerable lengths to prevent Jewish immigration. She has captured the essence of a real English put-down to a foreigner: "There is nothing like broken English to sabotage one's dignity and presence."

The family did not conform to any pattern. Her younger brother was educated at an independent school in London, emigrated to South Africa and was glad when Margaret Thatcher replaced Edward Heath as leader of the Tory party. "Red Heath is not right wing enough," he wrote home.

Silvia married Bill, on the right wing of the Labour Party and subsequently a co-founder of the Social Democrats, the name of a party she had been taught to despise in Germany. She obviously cannot stand another co-founder, David Owen, but declines to say why. She admits that in many ways she is all over the place. She could write another volume, for *Red Saint, Pink Daughter* more or less stops at 1979.

Malcolm Rutherford

New York has long been a siren among cities, luring, and so many of its wrecking, many of America's most ambitious, opportunistic, or just plain desperate, citizens and creating a unique ferment of talent in the process.

So Ann Douglas's study, *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s*, reminds us. The book touches on the lives of 150 or so notorious New Yorkers, some native, most arrivals. A third were either alcoholics or problem drinkers, against a national average of one in ten.

Among them were entertainers Sophie Tucker, Al Jolson, Irving Berlin and Harry Houdini, writers Langston Hughes, Dorothy Parker and Zora Neale Hurston, the "Black Eagle" (aviator Hubert Fawcett), Jimmy Walker (the "Night-club Mayor") and Babe Ruth.

Together, they were chosen by Professor Douglas, who teaches at Columbia, to help

A unique ferment of talent

Alice Hiller on the boldness, ambition and excesses of New York in the jazz age

capture a sense of "national psyche" during what she presents as a decade of unparalleled change and emancipation, both at home and abroad.

While "America seized the economic and cultural leadership of the West," black America was "recovering its own heritage from the dominant white culture," not least, of course, through the Harlem Renaissance then underway. With American movies, music and writing sweeping through Europe, and new skyscrapers reaching for the heavens, it was a time when everything seemed possible. Douglas's project seems to have absorbed something of the jazz age's boldness and ambition.

Her argument is divided into three sections. The first addresses "the central ethos of

the age" - New York's supposedly taboo-breaking and modernist spirit of "terrible honesty" for which the book is titled. Whether any era can in fact claim a monopoly on this commodity is debatable - Whitman might have been seen to be in possession of it in the 1850s. To her credit Douglas does show that Raymond Chandler's phrase was echoed by his fellow artists, espoused by those dining at the Algonquin's round table, and eventually taken up by Madison Avenue. Here it became the basis for numerous advertising campaigns, as when Listerine advised potential clients to "Suspect yourself first."

Douglas attributes the spread of this "terrible honesty" principally to Freud. His ideas influenced everything

from Ruth Snyder's sensational murder trial (her lawyers contended she was a "hysterical" seduced by her "demon lover" into bludgeoning her husband to death), to John Barrymore's hugely successful

TERrible HONESTY: MONGREL MANHATTAN IN THE 1920s
by Ann Douglas
Penguin £20, 606 pages

1922 production of *Hamlet*, based on *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Taking Freud's reading literally, Barrymore maintained that Hamlet's "subconscious" was dominated by his Oedipal obsession, and cast the attractive, and younger, actress Blanche Yurka as Ger-

trude. He also prepared for the role with an analyst who published critiques of his acting in the New York Medical Journal, while working with a set designer and director who were committed Freudians.

Such anecdotal evidence gives a far more vivid sense of America's blend of high and low culture, and receptivity to new ideas, than the psychoanalytic readings of literature and history which follow. They occupy the central, and weakest, section of *Terrible Honesty* - "War and Murder." Here Douglas juggles Freud with Gertrude Stein, William James and Ernest Hemingway - whose war writing is pitted slightly unfairly against that of Owen, Sassoon and Graves - in support of her corollary thesis that "American metropoli-

tan modernism" had its origins in the Great War and was fuelled by a "matriarchal scenario" aimed at defeating 19th-century values. The argument is partly a sequel to her earlier study, *The Feminization of American Culture*, but needlessly complicates an already powerful narrative.

It is not until the third and final section, "Siblings and Mongrels" that *Terrible Honesty* really finds itself again, turning once more to New York and the "charged collaboration of black and white talent in the 1920s" which helped make-over popular culture. Instantiating the often fraught relations between white patrons and black artists, Douglas relates Bessie Smith's private party performance for Earl Van Vechten, an enlight-

ened and wealthy photographer who wrote trail-blazing articles on the blues for *Vanity Fair* in 1925 and 1926. Bessie had agreed to perform as a special favour, but was drunk on arrival at his 55th Street apartment, and grew steadily more so as she sang - finally, and brutally, knocking down Van Vechten's wife when she went to embrace the singer afterwards.

Taken together, these stories - the fruit of 15 years' research - do indeed succeed in conveying something of the "national psyche" of 1920s America, effectively piling up a hotchpotch of images, rather like Whitman's poetry of New York. Through them, Ann Douglas also continues the rehabilitation of a generation of African-Americans often still unfairly eclipsed by their white contemporaries. Above all, though, *Terrible Honesty* makes the period which shaped much of today's popular culture seem, if not less remote, then more accessible.

A match for the thinking man

With or without gender-spectacles, this book is a treat, writes Christian Tyler

Of course we have women's tennis and we have feminist art history. But "women's philosophy" makes about as much sense as "women's coalmining". The job is the same, whatever the sex of the person wielding the pick. Isn't it?

Baroness Warnock thinks it is, and surely she is right. In compiling this fascinating anthology, however, she has had to employ some nimble footwork to deliver the brief, which is to give women their rightful place in the history of ideas while keeping out of spitting range of the feminist titans.

As an academic philosopher Mary Warnock is a predictably rigorous gate-keeper. In spite of a real dearth of candidates to choose from before women's emancipation, she has ruled out all religions and mystical writers from Julian of Norwich down to Anne Besant. Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia, a correspondent of Descartes, falls on the ground that her letters would make no sense without his; Harriet Taylor, J.S. Mill's philosopher wife, simply because she wrote nothing down.

Warnock sweeps round the swelling flood of modern feminist writing (genderised epistemology, ontology, what have you) with the sharp comment that it contains "too much unexamined dogma... too much concealed proselytising". The great subjects of philosophy, she writes, are universal and gender-indifferent. Gently she slaps down the post-modern relativists "engaged in a species of anthropology."

However, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-97), the mother of feminism, gets in for her egalitarian political philosophy. A good thing, too: her essay on the dangers of confining girls to a life of domesticated numbskullery is elegant and devastating, one of the best things in the book.

The editor's intention is to show not only the quality but the variety of women's philosophical writing. Here she comes up against another difficulty. Women tend to specialise in moral philosophy. Formerly that meant writing from a religious point of view. Today, she says, too: her women important contributors to the post-1950s growth of so-called "applied philosophy" - medical ethics, for example, where Warnock herself has been involved.

One strand of modern moral philosophy is represented here by

Onora O'Neill, principal of Newnham College, Cambridge. An anti-utilitarian, she likes to work at the coal face itself. Her writing is consequently deep, difficult and rewarding. Judith Jarvis Thomson, a professor at MIT, represents another. Though the essay chosen here is on a "women's issue", abortion, it is a pointedly philosophical treatment. (In brief, Thomson assumes for the sake of argument that a fetus is a human being from conception then asks whether its womb-rights are absolute or only limited.)

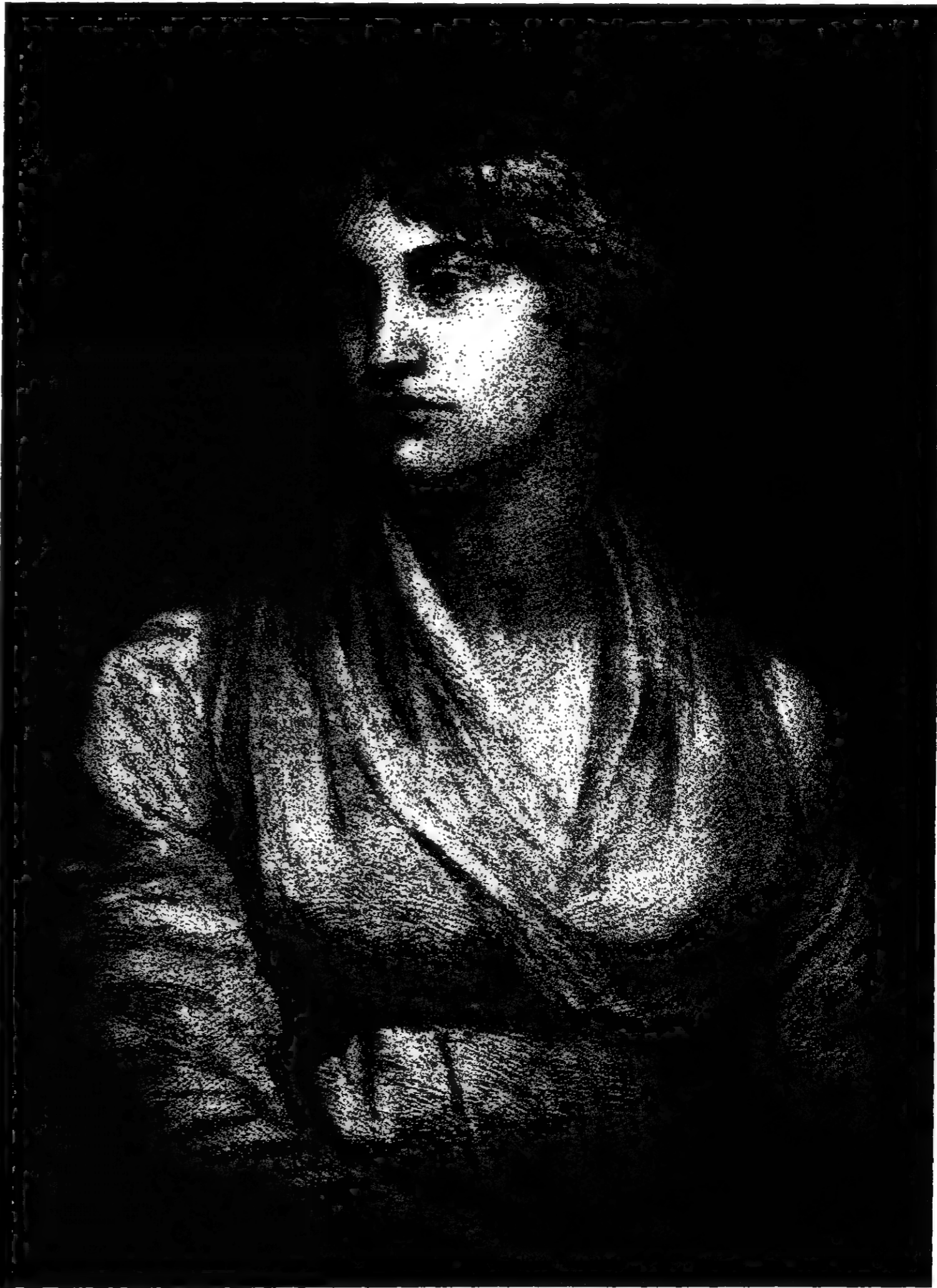
Among the other modern professionals are the logician Susan Stebbing (1885-1943) who was the first female professor of philosophy in Britain; Suzanne K. Langer (1895-1985), a pupil of Alfred North Whitehead; and Elizabeth Anscombe, the formidable interpreter of Wittgenstein whom Warnock calls "the undoubted giant

WOMEN PHILOSOPHERS
edited by Mary Warnock
J.M. Dent £20, 300 pages

among women philosophers." Three Existentialist writers are included, two of them on grounds that seem to contradict the editor's own precept. They are Hannah Arendt, best known for her analysis of totalitarianism; and Simone de Beauvoir, whose work is thoroughly entangled with that of Jean-Paul Sartre. The third is Iris Murdoch, whose defence of ethics against solipsism, utilitarianism and scientific reductionism certainly earns its place.

"In the end," says Warnock, "I have not found any clear 'voices' shared by women philosophers." She expresses her admiration for the leashed women who took up philosophy as a hobby and became so expert before universities were open to them. As for the post-emancipation professionals, "they turn out, unsurprisingly, to be as various as their male colleagues."

Warnock has managed to have her cake and eat it, too: she has promoted the female cause without undue concession to the feminist. With or without one's gender-spectacles on, this book is a treat, well-written and unexpected. Let us hope it does not end up in the bookshop marked "Women's Studies." That would be a perversion of its purpose.



Mary Wollstonecraft, mother of feminism, who warned against the dangers of confining girls to a life of domesticated numbskullery

Mary Evans Picture Library

Rereadings

Why 'Lolita' is still irresistible

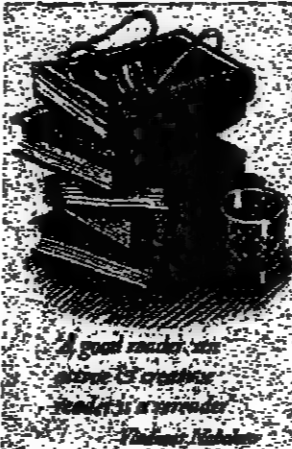
But Jackie Wullschlager finds her attitude has changed towards Nabokov's favourite heroine

count on a murderer for a fancy prose style".

Every agitated detail underlines his obsession, from his loitering on his beloved's name - "Lo-lee-ta: the tip of the tongue taking a trip of three steps..." - to a fleeting scene where Humbert watches Lolita talking through a car window to a stranger and knows, from her slightest gesture, that she is in fact intimate with him and that this rendez-vous heralds his own downfall. Among 20th-century writers, only Proust caught as perfectly the sense of hopeless, compulsive desire, and the mix of self-hate and all-encompassing enchantment that it engenders.

Last year, I bought the 1980s Penguin *Lolita*. As it happens, the new cover, a painting of a *gauche* child with hitched-up skirt and ankle socks, reflects precisely my own changed response on rereading the book. Fifteen years later, and as a mother of two daughters, I focused instead on vulnerability and pain. The sleeping Lolita rejecting Humbert's caresses "not consciously, not violently, not with any personal distaste, but with the neutral plaintive murmur of a child demanding its natural rest", for example. Or Lolita holding back tears when she sees her fat friend Aris perched clumsily on the knee of her pink, plump dad, about to go home to her dog and baby sister. Penguin's blurb is shy of rapture, too: whereas the 1980s cover talked

of "intoxicating sensuality", this one advertises "pleasure in art... divine game... rich, elaborate verbal textures".



No one would dare to write a book like *Lolita* today. Why do we find the book at once so unforgivably disturbing and so irresistible?

Nabokov scoffed at the moralists, but it remains true that his novel is threatening because it makes a tale of chronic molestation deeply engrossing and it invites us, through the honey-hued eloquence of Humbert's narration, to identify at least in part with the molester. Our relationship with other pathological literary heroes - Macbeth, Julien in Stendhal's *Scarlet and Black*, for example - is much chillier.

The key difference is that, as Martin Amis points out in the superb introduction to the Everyman edition, in *Lolita*

Nabokov "constructs a mind in the way that a prose Browning might have gone about it, through rigorous dramatic monologue". What makes *Lolita* so much more a love story for our own times than the great 19th-century romances is this ironic, often hilarious, self-consciousness: we see Humbert create both himself and Lolita, and the fact that he is trapped by his obsession is the construct of the novel. (Nabokov said he was inspired by reading about an ape who was laboriously taught to draw, and eventually produced his first picture: the bars of his cage.)

Like all great works of art, *Lolita* is of course a celebration of art, and in the end Humbert is accorded more value than

Claire Quilty, the fellow-abuser whom he kills, because he is an artist who can make his beloved "live in the minds of later generations... this is the only immortality you and I may share, my Lolita".

But if art is the only reality, we can all read *Lolita* our own way. Teenage erotic fantasy, tale of fragility - Nabokov said he admired Lolita as a character more than any of his other creations except for Pinin - love affair with America or artistic game: it is a book which can accommodate our own changes of experience as well as the shifting climates of our culture.

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ARTS

The coincidence in London of substantial exhibitions of the work of the American painters Jean-Michel Basquiat and Julian Schnabel is fortunate. In their reputations, both were creatures of the 1980s and the vastly-promoted international art market of those times, which was centred particularly upon New York and its every latest novelty. To look back from our late recessionary vantage point is to look back upon another world.

The comparison between the two is salutary. One was black, the other is white. Both emerged at more or less the same time, around 1980, Schnabel to almost immediate critical and institutional recognition and support, Basquiat to rather more underground and recondite celebrity. He died in 1988 in tragic and squalid circumstances, of an heroin overdose at the age of 27. Schnabel lumbers on.

Fortunes were made both through and for them, though often it would seem quite independent of any virtue or quality in their work. Appearance, style and attitude were everything. And fortunes still hang on the maintenance, however tenuous, of those reputations.

Basquiat is by far the more natural and better artist, for all that so much of his work is perfunctory to an extreme in execution, unresolved in imagery, rambling and inclusive in composition and intention. That, its apologists would maintain, is its point.

What does come through, and with remarkable force, is Basquiat's physical energy and engagement as an artist, manifested in a line that is taut and active, and a remarkable sensitivity of touch, whatever the violence and crudity of the overall effect.

His background, in the later 1970s, was the sprayed graffiti painting of the New York slums and subway, with its base in the popular culture of comic books and advertising, and its natural use of words and slogans. Indeed, under the cryptic signature, SAMO, he was famous among his peers before ever he was known to them.

What made him fundamentally different, however, and immediately intriguing to a more sophisticated audience, was the broader scope of his influences, that extended beyond mere comics and car-



A raw talent excitingly explosive in potential, but tragically cut short: 'Win a \$1,000,000', 1984 by Jean-Michel Basquiat (with Andy Warhol)

The Basquiat Estate

American graffiti

William Packer reviews the work of Julian Schnabel and Jean-Michel Basquiat

toons into the high art of post-war New York painting, from the abstract expressionists to Rauschenberg, Johns and Andy Warhol.

Add to such knowings an evident affinity with Art Brut, native and tribal art as such, and Basquiat's own street-wise vitality, and the mixture is excitingly explosive in potential. The tragedy is that such potential was to remain largely unfulfilled. For here was an artist of raw and unformed talent who was indulged as no more than that, and clearly persuaded that to be raw and unformed was enough. There is no development and further refinement in the work, but only self-indulgence, and an

increasingly desperate self-indulgence at that. Eventually it was to kill him. The talent still shines through.

Schnabel's is a very different case, for while we can but acknowledge his early and persistent success, it is very hard to see sign of any talent whatsoever. If his is a triumph, it is simply over the critical gullibility of others, and good luck to him. But he is no cynic, for he clearly believes in himself and his abilities.

We have here a brief resumé of his career since the early 1980s, including both painting and sculpture. The abiding characteristic of both is a grossly inflated scale, which serves only to emphasise the

emptiness of surface and graphic inadequacy of the one, and the ponderous self-importance of the other.

All we are left with is the innate impressiveness that comes with size alone. Basquiat, too, worked large, but sustained it with energy and attack. Schnabel has never drawn a line that was not flaccid, weak and dull. And the larger the mark or stroke, the more inescapable its qualities, or lack of them. Painting them across a surface of broken plates is only to make them worse.

The most interesting things are the large totemic bronzes, the "Epitaphs", in a room by themselves. Simple columns,

broad and flat, with lintels above, they are somewhat overbearing and portentous together, but would work well enough alone, their surfaces interestingly textured and patinated. I would rather have seen the worked surfaces of wood and cloth from which they were cast, but there we are.

When Schnabel draws in the paint, it is an embarrassment. His escape is either to run paint broadly across the surface or slosh it about in amorphous figures, augmented perhaps by some gnomish text.

"Lux" reads the sign beneath a purple blob and an orange scrawl on a pink ground.

"Vision de Merde" informs a dim purple figure in a dark brown void. "Anything", wrote the young Julian 20 years ago, "can be a model for a painting - a popular tree, another painting, a smudge of dirt."

Just so.

Jean-Michel Basquiat: The Serpentine Gallery, Kensington Gardens W2, until April 21; sponsored by Ally Capellino, European Investment Managers and Madonna, in association with The Guardian and Kiss 100 FM, Oxford Exhibition Services and The Pale Green Press.

Julian Schnabel: Waddington Galleries, 11 & 34 Cork Street W1 until April 4.

Television/Christopher Dunkley

At home with Einstein

Having established that $E = mc^2$, Albert Einstein went on to formulate the even more significant general theory of relativity, thereby causing as great a revolution in our thinking about the universe as Copernicus did in the 16th century when he erased the Ptolemaic picture and showed that the earth and planets revolved around the sun. The trouble is that while this is easily recognised by any intelligent person, Einstein's theory is incomprehensible to most. Could this be why *Horizon* has decided to tell us what the furniture was like in Einstein's bedsit, and what an unhappy sex life he had?

It is not that the programmes, *Horizon: Einstein*, to be shown on BBC2 on Sunday and Monday, are poor pieces of work. True, there is one howler when a lake steamer, used to illustrate Einstein's thoughts on the observation of motion, is said to be moving at "five knots an hour", but the general level of professionalism is high. Andrew Sachs, a man whose talents seem ever more impressive (his documentaries about his childhood in Berlin were splendid, and his portrayal of Manuel in *Paddy Towers* legendary) plays Einstein with such total versatility that you cease to notice when you are watching Sachs and when it is archive film. And there are beautiful shots of various European locations as "wallpaper" for the account of Einstein's life.

The producers, Peter Jones and Tom Levenson, devote 100 minutes to their subject. The trouble is that too much consists of attempts to show that this was no head-in-the-clouds professor with a one-track mind on the bending of starlight, but a tortured soul with an outrageous social life whose public triumphs have, until now, obscured a catalogue of scandals. There are, indeed, details which have emerged from the love letters and other papers coming to light recently which add incidental interest to what we know about Einstein. The pre-nuptial love affair with Mileva, the illegitimate daughter, the affair with his cousin, the divorce, the marriage to his cousin, and the continued appetite for younger

women, are all interesting - if only for showing what a remarkably ordinary individual Einstein was in many ways.

This material is all presented competently enough, but the point, surely, is that there are plenty of other programmes on television taking this sort of *Woman's Own* attitude to the famous, whereas there is only one *Horizon*. Of course there is no statute requiring *Horizon* to have pie charts, Bunsen burners and scientists in white coats in every programme; the series has used many styles and approaches, up to and including filmed drama. Yet the level at which it has been pitched has scarcely varied. *Horizon* has been admirably consistent in showing that television does not have to talk down to viewers but can cover science in an adult and moderately demanding manner.

There are some attempts here to use television, not for the first time, to illustrate Einstein's theories. The chief danger is in getting carried away by the metaphor and losing sight of the idea. On this occasion the example of two observers, one stationary, one travelling on a train, seeing lightning strike two posts simultaneously, to show that the speed of light is constant but that time is relative, works very well. However, the attempt to illustrate how gravity bends light is less successful: computer-generated pictures of planets hanging in the space-time continuum represented by three dimensional lines of latitude and longitude invariably end up looking like fishing floats hanging in a net.

There are, though, fewer of these attempts to illustrate the science than one would wish, and much more about the woman languishing in the Einstein home. The subtlety throughout tries to tell us that the social aspects of his life had a significant effect upon his work. If the evidence were produced to support this, perhaps *Horizon* would be justified in going down this road, but there is not a scrap. It is a pity that greater attention was not paid to one of Einstein's own statements included in Programme 1: "The essence of a man like me lies in what I think, not what I feel". Quite.

Radio/Martin Hoyle

Sounds off the screen

What a curious series Radio 4's *Cinema 100* has turned out to be: a peg on which to hang sound adaptations of famous films, presumably, which seems a bit self-defeating from the start. Radio is best, as the old cliché has it, when creating its own pictures, not trying to conjure up others already celebrated. And what an odd range of choice. If you want to broadcast *A Taste of Honey* you hardly need a famous film excuse: it started life as a famous play, for heaven's sake. If you want to broadcast classics you might as well slap the label of "great cinema" on to plays like *Henry V* or *The Coriolanus*, or literature like *A Death in Venice* or *The Lady with the Little Dog* - all of which have made halfway decent films. If on the other hand you want to revive essentially cinematic classics you should do better than dredging up obscurities like *The Broadcasting House Murders* which, half a century later, looks a pretty thin in-joke and in no sense a classic.

Most tenuous of all is the adaptation of a stylised stage play about film people. The recent *Laurel and Hardy*, adapted from his play by Tom McGrath, promised much, not least for Robbie Coltrane and John Sessions in the title-roles. Sure enough, *Sessions* is a marvel. His trippingly flat-out mid-Atlantic tones brought out a hitherto unused pecked link between Stan Laurel and Edward Fox. But this was not enough to unclog this joint biography-as-double-act which was crippled without the sight gags. It was trapped, to begin with, in the historical-biographical convention of having characters tell one another what they already knew for the audience's benefit ("your mother's an actress too"), or the unconditional surrender of "Do you remember...?" Lots of whimsical sound effects and period piano accompaniment were no consolation for this creakily mirthless frolic.

Readers of this column might have concluded recently that Radio 4 had the monopoly

of moral debate. Radio 5 Live tends to be overlooked because of what should be its greatest strength, the flexibility that last Wednesday, for example, was able to focus on the tragedy in Dunblane at short notice and great length.

Five Live's *The Magazine* has waded into prostitution with great effect. Current reports of Asian vigilantes beating up and robbing tarts in Bradford sparked a comparison between the business as conducted here and in Germany. Bradford sounded frightening; the prostitutes welcome police arrest as a haven from the vicious harassment of young Asians (in recent Radio 4 item maintained that the police abstain from action to avoid racial tension; another story, and even more frightening.) In Doncaster, Clars gets Christmas gifts from ex-punters ("all some of them need is a bit of a chat"). In Sheffield Irene looks after her teenage grandson since her daughter's murder after two weeks on the game, bullied into it by a pimp. Irene was educated, articulate and middle-class, which made the subject harder to sweep under the convenient carpet of deprived inner-city squalor. All of them - girls, pub landladies (equally terrorised by vigilantes), local clergy - are in favour of legalising the game.

The advantages were made plain in Mönchengladbach. City and federal laws apply to registered brothels with regular and frequent health checks. Even sex in alley-ways and cars is easier and safer, though here pimps are found. And a new use is suggested for those empty factories, monuments to the "leaner, fitter industry" of the Thatcher era. We visited a disused German factory now transformed into a smart private brothel, rooms rented by the women when they felt like it. No pimps, no extortion, no danger of drug-addicted girls or clients. The case for legality seems overwhelming. Already providing the coolie labour of Europe, Britain can launch a new heritage industry in her dark Satanic mill: one that sums up the new virtues of thrift, private enterprise and self-reliance.

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■ Results due next week

[illegible]

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[illegible]

Directors' dealings

Now that the reporting season has begun, options-related transactions have increased, writes Vivien MacDonald of *The Inside Track*.

The largest transaction of the week was at electronics company *Acorn*, where two investors bought each some 675,000 shares at \$71p. This has left them with a combined holding of more than 80 per cent.

The second largest transaction was at Acorn Computing, where non-executive director Hermann Hauser sold 1.6m shares at 215p. The company recently announced a disappointing 10% drop in the share price, but the shareholders have outperformed the market by a margin of more than 100 per cent over the past year.

■ Directors' share transactions in their own companies

Company	Sector	Revenue 1990	Value 1990	No. of Directors
SALES				
Acorn Computer	Elec	1,600,000	3604	1
Alco	Elec	1,350,000	3281	2
Burtonwood Brewery	Brew	115,892	198	1
Chamberlain Plipco	Chem	55,048	40	1
Cloze Bros	Min	80,000	297	1
Flying Flowers	RetG	18,000	29	1
Inspire Group	Chem	7,000	29	1
Inspirations	L&H	450,000	468	3
Manver-Swain	Elec	100,000	298	1
NWF Group	DM	5,000	17	1
Northern Electric	Elec	5,547	48	1
Quality	Hls	5,000	15	1
Spergo Consulting	SSer	7,500	14	1
Vega Group	SSer	500,000	1790	1
Yorkshire Water	Wat	7,000	47	1
East Midlands	Elec	3,800	28	1
Hanson	Dial	7,408	24	1
Roll-Royce	Eng	438,287	942	1
Standard Chartered	Bank	95,000	506	1
Vickers	Eng	16,128	47	1
Wiggins Group	BOON	6,000,000	24	1
PURCHASES				
Cardiff Prop	Prop	10,000	14	1
First Leisure	L&H	5,468	21	2
Group Dev Cap Tr	InvT	32,500	15	1
Harris (Phils)	Dia	10,000	24	1
Hewetson	BEMM	220,000	77	1
Independent Insu	Insu	10,000	47	1
Ivory & Sins	OTHF	75,000	170	1
Osprey Commcns	Mdis	111,292	28	1
Raine	BCON	510,000	77	2
Royal Bank of Scot	Bank	3,000	17	1
Smith & Neph	Hsm	3,320	10	1
Willis Corron	Insu	125,000	195	1

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Complete these items only if you are a director or officer of the company. This list contains all transactions listed and USM, including exercise of options () if 100% subsequently sold, with a value over £10,000. Information released by the Stock Exchan

In the Pink

Spare us this action replay of a nation's decline

Britain can learn from economic history as Europe looks towards a single currency, says **Brian Reading**

Brian Reading is a director of Lombard Street Research

I have an old computer in a junk cupboard. It still works but hasn't been used for years. I don't know why I keep it. Much the same can be said of the hereditary peers whom Labour leader Tony Blair wants to eject from the House of Lords.

The peerage lost most of its wealth and political influence years ago, as shown in David Cannadine's splendid book, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy**. But he does not see, and I had not realised until I read it, what a massive effect this had on the UK and world economies.

In the three decades before the first world war, the UK ran a current account surplus averaging 7 per cent of GDP. Indeed, it reached 10 per cent in 1914. This surplus made Britain the world's largest capital exporter, at a time when international investment was twice the size it is today.

But, contrary to what I had supposed previously, money was not simply pulled out of Britain by the attractions of higher returns in the then developing countries, the Americas and the British empire. It was pushed out by agricultural depression, Irish land acts and taxation.

The agricultural depression was the result of steam engines, which opened up new continents, and refrigerated steam ships, which linked these new continents cheaply to the old ones. In the late 19th century, British food prices halved and agricultural rents fell by a quarter or more.

Nothing was done to protect British land-owners. They lost their political dominance due to the growth of manufacturing interests and the electoral

Troubles in Ireland forced the sale of the great aristocratic estates there while estate duties, imposed by the Liberal chancellor, Sir William Harcourt in 1894, added to landowners' woes. But worse taxation was to follow, notably in Lloyd George's 1909 *people's budget* - opposition to

Ireland went - 11m acres out of 16m under Irish land legislation, at a cost of £100m to the British taxpayer - along with perhaps two-thirds of the great estates in Wales and half of those in England. As Cannadine put it: "The scale of this territorial transfer was rivalled only by two other revolutions in Britain this millennium: the Norman conquest and the dissolution of the monasteries."

any policy would

the UK was on the gold standard, the outflow put strain on the Bank of England's totally inadequate reserves. Monetary policy was kept excessively tight, deflating the economy and starving domestic industry of capital.

The UK's current account surplus was generated initially by depressing the economy - although the income from foreign investments produced surpluses later. The trade balance deteriorated as old industries were killed off by lower-cost foreign competitors while new industries starved of capital, failed to take their place; hence Britain's pre-1914 industrial decline. The capital export helped to finance those foreign competitors. Blame the lack of exchange rate flexibility under the gold standard for not taking the strain of highly desirable structural change.

Lessons for today are obvious. Continental Europe's high taxation is driving away capital and industry is hollowing out

The gold standard no longer exists but Germany would hate to see a single currency formed by an inner core of European countries, depreciate significantly. It would want European outsiders to peg their currencies to it, so as to share the pain. Nor would it welcome a weak sur against the dollar and yen.

European monetary policy would, therefore, be kept depressingly tight. Stagnation would be necessary to produce current account surpluses despite over-valued currencies. Europe would remain in the doldrums in a booming world economy.

Britain has been through all this before. Let us not go through it again.

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Europe	100	100	100	100	0%	100	100	100	100	0%	100	100	100	100	0%	100	100	100	100	0%
Asia	100	100	100	100	0%	100	100	100	100	0%	100	100	100	100	0%	100	100	100	100	0%
Latin America	100	100	100	100	0%	100	100	100	100	0%	100	100	100	100	0%	100	100	100	100	0%
Middle East	100	100	100	100	0%	100	100	100	100	0%	100	100	100	100	0%	100	100	100	100	0%
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